Philo-Semites, Anti-Semites and France's Jewish Communities in the late Third Republic (c.1900-1940)

Youngho Yoo
Master of Arts (by Thesis)
History Department
Durham University

2020

Abstract

This study analyses the attitudes of a wide spectrum of political commentators and the press on Jews in France between the 1880s and 1930s, and how these debates affected the self-understanding and mutual perspectives of the two distinctive French Jewish communities – the long-established Jews (known as Israélites) and the foreign Jews (known as Juifs).

The First chapter explains the formation and development of French Jews in the Third French Republic, demonstrating the relations between distinctive Jewish communities. Next two chapters explore philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic feelings of the French Right and Left. These chapters discuss the two opposite views of each political side on Jews and show their ambivalent positions that coexisted according to their own criteria. The last chapter investigates the attitudes of Israélites and Juifs to each other and France, particularly in relationship to Zionist ideas. It explains the precarious situation of Juifs and Zionism as a self-defense strategy for them against anti-Semitic threats and the indifferent attitude of Israélites

There was not a single opinion from one political or social group regarding Jewish communities in the Third French Republic. Rather, anti-Semitic and philo-Semitic feelings were distributed across the French Right and Left. These perspectives also changed continuously during the Dreyfus Affair, the First World War and the interwar period. In particular, the two Jewish communities were forced to reconsider their identity following the mass migration of Eastern European Jews and the rising anti-Semitic climate in French society. This resulted in friction and tensions between the two Jewish communities.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The history of the Jews in modern France needs to be understood in its diversity, since the Jewish population was made up of multiple communities. There were distinctive Jewish communities, including an assimilated French Jewish community and foreign immigrant Jewish society in the twentieth century; before the twentieth century, there was also a visible separation between the Sephardi Jews and Ashkenazi Jews. This separation had existed for centuries, and certainly preceded the French Revolution of 1789, rooted in various contexts of migration, professional mobility and legal privilege. Experiences of Jewish communities in France were rarely identical, and often diverged. Some points of contrast include the process and time period of assimilation, their attitudes towards French national identity, and their self-understanding.

Regardless of their different – sometimes ambivalent – experiences, French Jews could not avoid the mass murder that happened in the Shoah. The Vichy government did not hesitate to indiscriminately persecute Jewish citizens and Jewish immigrants. Moreover, with Vichy France's active assistances, the Nazis murdered more than 77,000 Jews in France by deporting them to extermination camps. This number was more than twenty-four per cent of the entire Jewish population who lived in metropolitan France at the end of 1940.[1] In the summer of 1942, approximately 13,000 foreign Jews, including women and their French-born children, were arrested by French police. Many of them were held at Vélodrome d'Hiver and other places, such as Drancy camp, guarded by French gendarmes. Subsequently, they were deported to extermination camps in East. Up until the end of the Second World War, the Vichy regime never

[1] Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York, 1993), pp. 280.

ceased to round up Jews; they found and arrested their Jewish citizens, including recently naturalised Jews and assimilated Jews (who were usually from long-established Jewish families) without drawing any distinction. As Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton proved in their seminal book, *Vichy France and the Jews,* the Vichy regime was never passive in the process of arrests of Jews in France, but rather actively participated in the Nazis' horrendous project. Donna Ryan, in *The Holocaust & the Jews of Marseilles*, has demonstrated the active collaboration of French officials in persecuting Jews through her case study on Marseille which remained in the Free Zone. Her research reconfirms the Vichy regime's active collaboration in stripping native and foreign Jews, as well as the Jews of North Africa, of their citizenship.[2] Her research indicates the converging fate of Jews in France during the Second World War. It did not matter whether they had French citizenship, or whether they were 'assimilated enough' or remained 'foreign'. None of Jews completely avoid being target of anti-Semitic policies and mortal persecutions. Approximately seventy-six per cent of Jews in France succeeded in surviving the war, thanks in part to bravery of French families who hid them or provided charity. Susan Zuccotti explained that the French Catholics exercised a moral leadership and many groups, such as OSE (*Oeuvre de secours aux enfants*; Children's relief organisation in French), EIF (*Éclaireurs israélites de France*; Jewish Boy Scouts of France in French) and MJS (*Mouvement de la jeunesse sioniste*; Zionist youth movement in French), rescued Jews.[3]

Despite the indifference of official policy, there was nevertheless a significant divergence between French Jews (called *israélites*) and foreign Jews (called *juifs*). There was a substantial difference in the death ratio between the French Jews and foreign Jews. According

[2] Donna E. Ryan, *The Holocaust & the Jews of Marseille: The Enforcement of Anti-Semitic Policies in Vichy France* (Urbana, 1996), pp. 211-212.
[3] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 224 and 283.

to Jacques Adler, also a Holocaust victim, of the 76,000 Jewish victims in France, there were around 16,000 native French Jews murdered and approximately 60,000 Jews who were either recently naturalized or immigrants were murdered.[4] Compared with 9 to 12.6 per cent of French Jews that were murdered, some 40 to 45 per cent of foreign Jews were killed.[5] Adler explains that this huge different death ratio is partly because the foreign Jews were comparatively more exposed to the danger and additionally, they were relatively less integrated in French society when the Second World War broke out, and so were bereft of the same level of support from their neighbours.[6] Different experiences ushered in tensions and friction within and between French Jewish communities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Therefore, the Jewish experience in modern France must be understood according to issues within different communities, rather than viewing them as a monolithic whole.

The criteria of what constituted 'Frenchness' invoked diverse – sometimes ambivalent – perspectives on the question of French national identity, especially since the nineteenth century. Primarily, the French Revolution of 1789 represented tremendous turning points for Jews of France (and ultimately Europe). In 1790 and 1791, French Jews were emancipated and legally became French citizens with civic rights: first the Sephardis of the South and West, and latterly the Ashkenazis in the East. However, emancipation ironically brought another form of 'Jewish question' in French society. Although they held French citizenship, French Jews' commitments as both French and Jewish were continually tested; moreover, they were sometimes forced to prove their Frenchness. In the revolutionary conception of French citizenship, it was not simply holding citizenship. As Gary Kates argued in his article, "Jews

[4] Jacques Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Responses and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944* (New York, 1989), pp. 14.
[5] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 284.
[6] Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution*, pp. 14.

into Frenchmen: Nationality and Representation in Revolutionary France", the discussion on Jewish emancipation was linked to the debate over the meaning of a French citizen.[7] According to Maurice Samuel's book *The Right to Difference,* how to become French was an especially important issue for Jewish communities of France.[8] The social and political status of the assimilated French Jewish community (known as *israélites* in French) had been dramatically affected by wider debates over French republican universalism. After the decree of Jewish emancipation in 1791, native Jews rapidly integrated and assimilated into French society over the subsequent century. According to Pierre Birnbaum's work, *Les Fous de la République*, a large number of French Jews achieved successes in French politics, culture, and economy, and became pillars of the Republican regime after 1870. However, historic anti-Jewish prejudices were joined by new anti-Semitic sentiment in the face of Jewish assimilation. Anti-Semites blamed the Jews of France (especially Ashkenazi Jews who were considered less assimilated by French nationals and their coreligionists, Sephardi Jews) because they did not seem 'French' enough. Jewishness was continuously attacked from the radical left as well as the radical and populist Right. Moreover, due to their commitment to universalism, many French Republicans were intolerant to granting any exceptional status to Jews and remained hostile to public expressions of Judaism. French Jews were often asked to reconcile their private and public, and religious and civic identities, often by sacrificing any expression of religious, ethnic or cultural difference behind a broader national ideal.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, an influx of foreign or refugee Jews from Central and Eastern Europe (known as *juifs* in French) put the israélites in an ambivalent position. The

---

[7] Gary Kates, 'Jews into Frenchmen: Nationality and Representation in Revolutionary France', *Social Research*, 56 no. 1 (1989), p. 223.
[8] Maurice Samuels, *The Right to Difference: French Universalism and the Jews*, (Chicago, 2016).

israélites were the majority compared to the incoming juifs, but still a minority in relation to non-Jewish French society. The incoming Jews usually fled from horrendous pogroms, as well as economic stagnation, in the Russian empire and Romania between the 1880s and 1900s. Additionally, according to Esther Benbassa's study, almost 200,000 Jewish immigrants arrived in France from Spain, Italy and Poland between 1906 and 1939. Due to these waves of immigration, 70,000 immigrants settled in Paris between 1920 and 1930.[9] Immigrant Jews formed a distinctive community in Paris, as immigrant Jews were more numerous than French native Jews in the city.[10] This large number in a short period made Jewish population more visible to the local residents, leading to them becoming easy scapegoats for a number of problems existing in French society. Even though anti-Semitism became less popular immediately after the First World War, due to the active participation of French Jews in the army, anti-Semitic sentiments soon regained widespread influence during the 1930s with another massive influx of Jewish refugees who fled from political persecution and crises in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Within this rising anti-Semitic climate, the israélites sought to enthusiastically demonstrate their Frenchness as they believed that by this, they could secure their social and political status in French society. The Israélites did not want to be associated with their foreign coreligionists despite feeling an obligation to provide them with assistance. They not only resented the juifs' very public signs of Jewish religious practice, which they feared would ruin Jewish reputation in French society; the stories of terrible pogroms experienced by the immigrants also reminded native Jews the reality of anti-Semitic persecution, which led to

[9] Esther Benbassa, *The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Princoton, 1999), pp. 148.
[10] Ibid.

feelings of horror and anxiety. However, the situation of foreign Jews was never easier than their French coreligionists. Although there were charitable organisations for migrant Jews, their position in French society was always unstable and vulnerable, as they were frequently the target of anti-Semitic attacks. The immigrant Jews in Paris mostly lived in certain areas, such as the *Pletzl*, studied by Nancy Green.[11] They were usually poor and even viewed as 'dirty' and 'infested' with germs by some anti-Semites. Moreover, they were not always welcomed by the assimilated French Jews – dashing hopes formed before their emigration. Alienated from French and Israélite society, many immigrant Jews were attracted to the Zionist idea and movement, which played a role as a kind of dignified resistance and self-defence.

My thesis will investigate the Jewish question in France between the 1880s and 1930s by looking at the attitudes of a wide spectrum of political commentators and journalists. It aims to how these debates affected the self-understanding and mutual perspectives of the two distinctive French Jewish communities – israélites and juifs – as well as the different varieties of anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism. There was not simply a 'typical' opinion from one political or social group; rather pro-Jewish and anti-Jewish feelings were distributed across right-wing and left-wing groupings within French society. These perspectives changed – and sometimes overlapped – continuously during the Dreyfus affair, the First World War, the polarisation of the interwar period, and the political and diplomatic crisis on the eve of the Second World War. Particularly following the mass migration of Eastern European Jews, native and foreign Jewish communities were forced to rethink their identity; sometimes, this resulted in friction and tensions between the two Jewish communities. Researching this specific topic will demonstrate how pro-Jewish and anti-Jewish polemics within the press re-shaped the

[11] Nancy L. Green, *The Pletzl of Paris* (New York, 1986), pp. 6

perspectives of the two French Jewish communities towards each other, and towards the possibility of finding a Jewish politics beyond French borders. This thesis combines an analysis of how the Jews were perceived by friends and critics within French society, with a reflection on how these perceptions in turn effected community intro-relations.

Historiography

Several historians have dealt with the topic of anti-Semitism in modern France, especially in the Third French Republic. Along with the study of Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton on Vichy France's anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism in modern France has been broadly studied: Many historians have discussed anti-Semitism since the Dreyfus Affair.[12] Pierre Birnbaum in *Anti-Semitism in France* surveys Jewish experiences in politics in Third French Republic and Vichy France, and explains why anti-Semitism was a recurrent issue within republican politics.[13] Zeev Sternhell has controversially explored the origins of fascist ideas in modern French society.[14] Importantly, he points out that anti-Semitic feelings were actually found not only in extreme right-wing but also in extreme-left. Robert Soucy additionally demonstrated the development of French fascism in interwar France and revealed different factions of French extreme right through his two-volume book, *French Fascism*.[15] Soucy argued that the anti-Semitic sentiment was not always consistent, but it had many relations with

[12] Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford, 1995).
[13] Pierre Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France: A Political History from Léon Blum to the Present*, trans. Miriam Kochan (Oxford, 1992).
[14] Zeev Sternhell, 'The Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic', in Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein (eds.), *The Jews in Modern France* (Hanover and London, 1985) and *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*, trans. David Maisel (Princeton, 1986).
[15] Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933* (New Haven, 1986) and *French Fascism: The Second Wave, 1933-1939* (New Haven, 1995).

diverse right-wing ideas, such as antidemocracy, paramilitarism, anti-Marxism or anti-liberalism, and circulated between various right-wing groups, for example, *Action Française*, *la Cagoule*, *Croix de Feu* and more. Recently, in *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy*, Kevin Passmore provides a history of the French Right between 1870 and 1944.[16] He demonstrates different forms of French conservatism during the Third French Republic and Second World War, for example, a royalist opposition to the Third Republic, the rising of the radical right in the late nineteenth century, the French Right in polarised French politics in the interwar period and finally the Vichy regime during the wartime. These historians provide a general framework for understanding the revival of anti-Semitic feelings in nineteenth and twentieth century France.

Far less research has been done on philo-Semitic sentiments and tensions between israélites and juifs, which has led to three particular drawbacks. First, the historiography has been focused largely on episodes of crisis: for example, Eric Cahm offers a detailed explanation on anti-Semitism and extremely polarised French society and politic during the Dreyfus Affair and Ruth Harris in *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century* examines the impact of public feelings on the Dreyfus affair and anti-Semitism.[17] Regarding the works on the Second World War and Shoah, there are the famous study of Marrus and Paxton on the Jewish persecution in Vichy France, Renée Poznanski's research on the daily-life of Jews during the war time, and Adam Rayski's study of war experiences of French Jews.[18] By contrast, far less attention has been paid to the lived experience of the Jewish communities in

[16] Kevin Passmore, *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy* (Oxford, 2013).
[17] Eric Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affiar in French Society and Politics* (London, 1996) and Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century* (New York, 2010).
[18] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France during World War II*, trans. Nathan Bracher (Hanover, 2001) and Adam Rayski, *The Choice of the Jews under Vichy: Between Submission and Resistance* trans. Will Sayers (Notre Dame, 2005).

the period between the 1880s and 1930s. Although there are significant studies on French Jews, such as David Weinberg's work of the political ferment of the community in the 1930s, research on French Jewry seems to be focused on the period of the Second World War and the Shoah.[19] Richer analysis of the pre-war situation will allow for a fuller understanding of the fate of different Jewish communities – israélites and juifs – during the 1940s.

Second, there are not many studies on the internal divisions with the French Jewish community, especially attitudes of the two Jewish communities towards each other. Although several historians, such as Jay Berkovitz, Paula Hyman, and Pierre Birnbaum specialise in the field, they do not give detailed information on the friction between the israélites and juifs between the fin-de-siècle and the eve of the Second World War.[20] They chiefly concentrate on relations between French Jews as a single group and the French nationals. The existing works on intra-community relations usually focus on one side and one group rather than exploring both sides and groups equally. Vicki Caron in *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942* explores the French responses to immigrant Jews who came over to France after the Nazis gained power in 1933.[21] Although she provides diverse spotlights onto French public opinion, government policy and the attitudes of native Jewish community, she focuses primarily on anti-Semitic sentiment in French society, not its alternatives. Nancy Green in *The Pletzl of Paris* deals carefully with the way Jewish immigrants settled in France and introduces the tension and friction among assimilated Jews and foreign Jews between the 1880s and 1910s. However, her focus seems to be limited as she concentrates on foreign Jews' presence in Paris,

---

[19] David H. Weinberg, *A Community on Trial: The Jews of Paris in the 1930s* (Chicago, 1977)

[20] Jay R. Berkovitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Detroit, 1989), Paula E. Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France* (Berkeley, 1998), and Pierre Birnbaum, *Les Fous de la République: Histoire politique des Juifs d'Etat de Gambetta à Vichy* (Paris, 1992).

[21] Vicki Caron, *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942* (Stanford, 1999).

and less on their interaction with the native population. Additionally, there are still several studies, such as Jacques Adler's *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution*, or Susan Zuccotti's *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, which give specific statistical information on Jewish victims of the Shoah, and provide an introduction of tensions that existed between the israélites and juifs. However, their studies provide comparably less details on the inner tensions that existed within the French Jewish community, and they are primarily focused on Holocaust experiences in France.

A third limitation is that there are less studies on the early twentieth-century anti-Semitic, philo-Semitic and Jewish press. As mentioned above, David Weinberg, Vicki Caron and Nancy Green explore internal friction of two Jewish communities in France; however, the connection between this communal friction and newspaper coverage has not been addressed. Esther Benbassa in her book, *The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present*, offers a list of various newspapers that were published by philo-Semites, anti-Semites, israélites and juifs in the interwar period.[22] Moreover, there are even less studies on philo-Semitism and the philo-Semitic press in interwar France, especially on conservative philo-Semites (Benbassa only introduces a philo-Semitic movement among French conservatives briefly). Catherine Poujol introduces de Férenzy (one of the Catholic philo-Semites in France in the interwar period) and his magazine, *La Juste Parole*, with a brief explanation on his biographical information through her article, '*Oscar de Férenzy ou les Limites du Philosémitisme dans l'Entre-Deux-Guerres*'.[23] As my research will be focused on revues and publications, particularly newspapers and magazines, it will provide a deeper understanding on

[22] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*.
[23] Catherine Poujol, "Oscar de Férenzy ou les limites du philosemitisme dans l'entre-deux-guerres", *Les Belles Lettre*, 40 no. 1 (2007).

French attitudes to Jews, which in fact were positioned along a spectrum rather than divided into partisan camps. It will show how analysing the press can shed light on what both Frenchmen thought about Jews during a volatile political era, but also how the press was a central arena in which Jews debated their own ambivalent position.

To summarise, the historiography on this topic seems to be limited both due to its chronological imbalance and, comparably, the lack of specific and detailed explanations on two different Jewish communities in France. As my research focuses on the israélites' thoughts about French national identity and their perspectives on juifs and vice versa, I will use diverse series of revues and publications that were published between the 1880s and 1930s in France. Both polemical presses from Right-wing and Left-wing will be used in chapter II and III after explaining the background to the making of modern French Jewry in the first chapter; next, the press of the israélites' and juifs' will be interrogated to reveal their attitudes to each other as well as the polarising political situation. My research seeks to broaden understanding of different Jewish perspectives and experiences, and explore what correlation existed between changes in French political culture, as tracked in the press, and the emergence of different Jewish positions towards assimilation and Zionism.

Methods and Sources

Analysing attitudes and perspectives of right-wing, left-wing and French Jews, many types of primary sources have been consulted for this dissertation, such as newspaper articles, magazine, or pamphlets. It was possible to access to these sources, both printed sources and handwritten sources, at several archives, such as the Archives Nationales (National Archives), Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris (Police Archives of Paris), and Archives du

Mémorial de la Shoah (Holocaust Museum Archives). Additional printed sources were available at Gallica, the digital library of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (National Library of France). At the Archives Nationales, I could access newspapers and magazines, such as *Cahiers Juifs*, *La Juste Parole*, *Le Peuple juif*, and *Shem: revue d'action hébraïque*; at the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris, several documents on conflicts between immigrant Jews and non-Jewish immigrants in Paris. Moreover, some other newspapers and periodical were accessible at the digitised library, such as *L'Humanité, L'Œuvre*, *Le Populaire*, and other issue of *Le Peuple juif* that were unavailable at the Archives Nationales. Additionally, I was able to find other issues of newspapers mentioned above, other printed sources or different types of primary sources from secondary sources I have used for this research. I sample articles and writings from papers across the political spectrum and analyse how conflicts over Jewishness spilt into many different domains, such as immigration, ethnicity, labour disputes, religious controversy, and French colonial policy. Secondary sources were also useful in this research, especially in providing voices from contemporaries which were not available.

Chapter Layout

The first chapter will explain the formation and the development of Jews of modern France between the Dreyfus affair to the eve of the Second World War. Even though my research is mainly focused on the perception of Jews of France and French Jewish communities in the Third French Republic, especially the interwar France, it is important to explain the formation and the development of French Jewry because this will provide brief information on different perceptions of different Jewish communities and tensions between them which often competed one another throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It will show how two

distinctive Jewish communities – Sephardi and Ashkenazi – fused into a group of 'israélites' who were Jews of French citizenship who were regarded integrated and assimilated into French society. Subsequently, it will demonstrate how the influx of Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe triggered a rise of anti-Semitism in modern French society; or at least it accelerated anti-Semitism which was already significant issue in the early nineteenth century as Julie Kalman discusses the renewal of Jews and their identity with a focus on Napoleon's decree and a series of revolutions in *Rethinking Antisemitism in Nineteenth-Century France*.[24] it will interrogate how this socio-political phenomenon affected the position of the assimilated Jews of France.

The next two chapters contain contrasting views towards Jews from each side of the political divide. The second chapter will explore philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic feelings that existed on the French Right. It will demonstrate how the right-wing anti-Semitism adopted nineteenth-century anti-Semitic stereotypes for the new circumstances of the twentieth century. It will demonstrate how these right-wing anti-Semitic sentiments attacked and scapegoated French Jewry. Conversely, it will also explain the nature of pro-Jewish feelings that appeared in right-wing publications. It will analyse why and how they were significant numbers of philo-Semitic articles, especially with a focus on de Férenzy's *La Juste Parole*.[25] The third chapter will discuss left-wing philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism. Tracking anti-Semitism among socialist thinkers and authors, it will demonstrate how it evolved throughout the Third French Republic. Subsequently, philo-Semitic attitudes of left-wing will be discussed since the time of the Dreyfus affair, whilst also examining their limitations, especially as the interwar period

[24] Julie Kalman, *Rethinking Antisemitism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 2010).
[25] La Juste Parole, 1936-1939, 26AS/12, Archives nationales.

advanced. Throughout the second and third chapter, it will analyse how the Jews in France became a target of anti-Semitism from two opposite political factions which fought for the control of the Republic. By revealing the limitations of philo-Semitism from both sides, it will demonstrate that Jews in France and their rights were not fully defended from neither political direction. Respectively in Chapter 2 and 3, I discussed the two opposite views of each political side on Jews so that I could show that their ambivalent positions coexisted at the same time according to their own criteria. Therefore, I could demonstrate not only that Jews of France were attacked harshly, but also that the Jews were not completely defended by philo-Semites who protected Jews and Jewish rights selectively.

The last chapter investigates the attitudes of assimilated French Jews and foreign Jews to each other and the French state, particularly in relationship to Zionist ideas. Dividing into two parts, first, it will show the perspectives of assimilated French Jews on Zionist ideology. It will analyse how the mass immigration affected both their thoughts on the fragility of French culture and their unease about immigrant coreligionists from eastern Europe. Subsequently, it will explain the precarious situation of foreign Jews and their own bitterness towards assimilated French Jews who were sometimes considered as traitors. Next, Zionism will serve as a focus, as it functioned as a self-defence strategy for foreign Jews against anti-Semitic threats from both right-wing and left-wing and against the indifferent attitude of assimilated Jews. Interestingly, it was not always that the established French Jews became assimilationist and foreign Jews became Zionist. The revival of anti-Semitism and rise of nationalist ideology in early twentieth century France did not simply categorise israélites as assimilationist and juifs as Zionists. Rather, there were also assimilationist foreign Jews and Zionist native Jews, adding further fragmentation within political debates.

To sum up, this thesis will argue that French right-wing and left-wing did not always stand on the opposite side regarding the Jewish question in modern France; rather they contained both anti-Semitic and philo-Semitic elements. It seems that this subtlety made the social and political status of Jews of France more unstable and vulnerable, and opened up a diversity of allies as well as sources of threat. This fracturing intensified miscommunication between native French Jewish and foreign Jewish communities. Only by studying these diverse debates, as represented in the press and subsequently translated into social institutions, can we appreciate why there was not one general response among French Jews to the threats facing them in interwar France.

CHAPTER 1: Formation and Development of French Jewry in Modern France

Formation and Development of the Native French Jews in Modern France

Sephardi Jews

Internal tensions among French Jewish communities existed long before the massive migration of foreign Jews, which rapidly increased from the late nineteenth century. Beginning in the early the medieval period, different Jewish communities emerged in France. More specifically, there were four Jewish communities in France: Sephardim (those who lived in the southwestern region, such as Bordeaux and Bayonne), Ashkenazim (those who were mainly from eastern provinces such as Alsace and Lorraine), Jews of the Papal States (those who were known as Avignonese Jews), and Parisian Jews. Among the four communities, major tensions and friction occurred between the Bordeaux Jews and Alsatian Jews; it was partly because the Jews of Papal States had similar privileges to those that the Sephardi Jews enjoyed, and the number of Parisian Jews were only handful in the early nineteenth century. Although the Sephardi Jews were few in number compared to their brethren in the eastern region of France, they were generally economically prosperous, and they secured a stable political and social status as a group in French society.[26]

Originally from Spain and Portugal, Marrano Jews settled in the cities of the Gironde

[26] Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815* (Berkeley, 2003), pp. 26-27.

region, such as Bordeaux, Saint-Esprit-lès-Bayonne, Bidache, Dax, and Peyrehorade, and founded the Sephardi communities throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[27] Most Sephardi Jews lived in cities. Around one thousand nine hundred fifty Jews thrived in the Bordeaux region, and two thousand five hundred Jews were in the Bayonne area at the same time of the emancipation of the Jews during the French Revolution.[28] According to Zosa Szajkowski's study, not every single Sephardi Jewish individual enjoyed wealth, of course. Although the Bordeaux region itself benefitted from Atlantic commerce with the French colonies, it is important to note that most of the Bordeaux population were poor and working class, as were the majority of Jews of Bordeaux. In addition, the Bordeaux Jews had to pay considerable tax to retain the privileges they were granted from the Kings of France.[29] Nonetheless, compared to their coreligionists in eastern France, the Sephardi Jews simply had better and more economic opportunities. Many enjoyed urban or bourgeois privileges, such as economic privileges, and became successful figures in their communities and various business areas. Several became bankers, merchants and army suppliers.[30] Michael Graetz provides examples of elite families in the Southwest's Sephardi community, including the Rabas, Azevedos, Dubecs, Rodrigueses, Pereires, Furtados and the Gradis.[31] The Gradis family was especially famous for obtaining fortunes via international commerce. The Gradis successfully managed businesses through global networks; commercial relations with the Jews of London and Amsterdam empowered the Gradis to extend their reach to the French islands in the

---

[27] Zosa Szajkowski, 'Population Problems of Marranos and Sephardim in France, from the 16th to the 20th Centuries', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 27 (1958), p. 83.
[28] Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, 2006), pp. 23
[29] Zosa Szajkowski, 'The Sephardic Jews of France during the Revolution of 1789', *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 24 (1955), p. 137-138.
[30] Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity*, p. 23.
[31] Michael Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France: From the French Revolution to the Alliance Israélites Universelle*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, 1996), pp. 22.

Caribbean, such as Martinique and Saint Domingue. They traded wines, liqueurs, salted beef, flour, sugar and indigo. Their influence grew far beyond the economy. They founded the Société du Canada so that they could supply the New France region and charter and arm ships for the French king during the Seven Years war. Other elite families such as the Dubecs, Rabas, and Furtados participated actively in banking, trading and running marine insurance.[32]

The political and social positions of Sephardi Jews tended to be stable and more secure than any other native Jewish communities in France until the early nineteenth century. While all of the French Jewry was emancipated during the French Revolution, the Sephardi Jews were emancipated first in 28 January 1790 one year earlier than the Ashkenazi Jews. This was partly because they were regarded as more 'integrated' and 'assimilated' than other Jewish groups. Even before emancipation, the Sephardim already participated in French politics at both the local and national level. For example, Abbé Grégoire, a French catholic who did not applaud the scission among the French Jews pointed out:

> Whenever the Estates-General have been convoked, Portuguese Jews [naturalised in France since the time of Henri II] have figured in elective assemblies…. In Bordeaux, four of them were chosen to run for the office of representative to the National Assembly: MM. David Gradis, elector, Furtado the Elder, Azevedo, and Lopès du Bec.[33]

The Sephardi Jews were more open to secular culture, for example, intermarriage or business relationship, and they integrated into urban bourgeois culture more readily. Generally

[32] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 53.
[33] Abbé Grégoire, *Motion en faveur des juifs* (Paris, 1789), 4-5, cited in Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France*, pp. 21.

speaking, they were acculturated in the French language, allowing them to easily assimilate into French society. In addition to being represented in politics, Esther Benbassa has noted their active participation in various fields of cultural life in the nineteenth century. For example, Catulle Mendès (1841-1909) was a famous writer and poet whilst Georges de Porto-Riche (1849-1930), a dramatist, was another famous figure in French cultural life. Moïse Polydore Millaud (1813-1871), who established the *Petit Journal*, gained fame in journalism alongside the well-known female journalist Eugénie Foa (1796-1850). Jews' cultural activity reached into fields of education and music as well. For example, David Lévi-Alvarés was a pedagogue who worked in women's education. Interestingly, their work rarely reflected any sign of their Jewishness.[34]

Ashkenazi Jews

The other important Jewish community was the Ashkenazim. Most members of the Ashkenazi community came from the Alemannic area (*Ashkenaz*; for example, those who were from the Rhineland and central Germany) and settled in the region of Alsace.[35] The situation of the Ashkenazi Jews was different from that of Sephardi Jews in various aspects beyond the origins of their communities. In terms of the size of the population, the Ashkenazi Jews outnumbered the Sephardim. On the eve of the French Revolution in 1789, there were about 30,500 Ashkenazi Jews in Alsace and Lorraine, and there were more than 180 Jewish communities in Alsace alone.[36] Their population grew, and in 1808, there were around 37,000 Jews in Alsace

[34] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 98.
[35] Ibid., pp. 69.
[36] Nancy L. Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 23 (1989): p. 136. and Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 7.

and Lorraine (respectively 26,000 and 11,000); at the time, this made up almost seventy-nine per cent of the entire Jewish population of France. In 1861, the Ashkenazim was still the largest Jewish community at about 50,000 in Alsace and Lorraine (respectively 35,000 and 15,000). Although the percentage of the French Jewish population declined from seventy-nine per cent to fifty-seven per cent, the Ashkenazim still made up more than half of the Jewish population in France despite there being three other communities.[37] At the same time, and despite their great number, their positions in French society were more vulnerable in every respect, particularly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

There were a few wealthy Jewish merchants and bankers in Alsace and Lorraine on the eve of the Revolution. For example, there was Cerf Berr who was regarded as a leader of Alsatian Jews and Berr Issac Berr. They promoted the Jewish Enlightenment or Haskalah through circulating a pamphlet they had translated from an original German version circulated in Berlin.[38] However, there was only a handful of elite Jews among the Ashkenazim in north-eastern France, compared to those from the south-eastern part. The rest were usually poor (and comparatively poorer than Sephardis), and most were lower- or middle-class small shopkeepers and local tradesmen. They worked as peddlers and dealers who traded old clothes, horse and cattle, and grain. They were also commercial brokers, petty merchants, and money lenders.[39] Restrictions on economic and social activities made them more vulnerable in local society. For example, they were restricted from living in the city of Strasbourg and had to pay immoderate

[37] Jean-Jacques Becker, 'De la Révolution aux années 1880', in Nadia Déhan-Rotschild et Catherine Morhange (eds.), *Les Juifs de France: De la Révolution française à nos jours*. (Lonrai, 1998), p. 49.
[38] Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 13.
[39] Paula E. Hyman, 'The Social Contexts of Assimilation: Village Jews and city Jews in Alsace', in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 111.

taxes just to continue living in France.[40] Without the economic and geographic advantages of the Sephardi Jews, the Ashkenazi Jews had difficulties accessing business opportunities and endured continuous local anti-Semitism.

Compared to the Bordeaux and Parisian Jews or even reform-minded Berlin Jews who led a movement known as *Berlin Haskalah*, most Alsatian Jews were more observant even after the French Revolution, and most lived outside secular culture. They were more religious than the Sephardi Jews and they typically communicated with each other in their own Yiddish dialect, rather than French.[41] This linguistic feature continued to the mid-nineteenth century. According to Hyman's research on the Alsatian Jews of the nineteenth century, they often signed in Hebrew characters up until the mid-nineteenth century; the French language remained foreign to them. For example, it is apparent from records that twenty-seven per cent of grooms and fifty-eight per cent of brides could not sign their names in French in the 1820s and 1830s. Even in the 1840s, ten per cent of the grooms and thirty-seven per cent of the brides still used Hebraic characters for their signatures.[42] Additionally, many Jews in the villages and small towns of Alsace kept using traditional Jewish names. Hyman shows that there was a high proportion of traditional Jewish names in the 1770s and 1780s (seventy-six per cent Jewish names), and this remained relatively the same until the 1830s (sixty-nine per cent Jewish names). In the 1860s, many more Alsatian Jews began taking French names.[43] This was one feature of their deepening integration into French society.

The Ashkenazi community gained emancipation on 27 September 1791; there was

---

[40] Pierre Birnbaum, *Jewish Destines: Citizenship, State, and Community in Modern France*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York, 2000). pp. 38-39.
[41] Hyman, 'The Social Contexts of Assimilation', p. 111.
[42] Ibid., p. 114-115.
[43] Ibid., p. 115.

more opposition to this legislation within the National Assembly, leading to it happening one year later than the Sephardim, and with different conditions. In contrast to the case of the Bordeaux Jews, Jews in Alsace, Metz and Lorraine faced resistance from the Gentile population and local officials regarding granting citizenship.[44] The emancipation of the Ashkenazim put all Jews in an ambivalent position. Up until the moment of achieving the equal civic rights that their Sephardi coreligionists received, the political participation of the Ashkenazi Jews was concentrated on petitioning and lobbying for emancipation while at the same time attempting to protect their culture from the universalist ideas of French revolutionaries. Pierre Birnbaum describes this situation in his work as follows:

> These Jews attempted to protect their communitarian structures, rabbis, syndics, and particular laws that would assure the harmony of the "Jewish nation." In their lengthy "Petition of the Jews settled in France addressed to the National Assembly" of 28 January 1790, the Alsatian Jews claimed the right to preserve their own collective structures within revolutionary France.[45]

However, the universalist ideas were required to the Ashkenazi Jews as well as Sephardi Jews, as Maurice Samuels described, "Jews must *choose* whether to become French, at least in theory."[46] As Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre, one of the prominent revolutionary politicians during the French Revolution, declared, French Jews were forced to abandon their traditional identity and were to be treated like other citizens in France.[47] In the name of laïcité,

---

[44] Zosa Szajkowski, 'The Sephardic Jews of France during the Revolution of 1789', pp. 163.
[45] Pierre Birnbaum, 'Between Social and Political Assimilation: Remarks on the History of Jews in France', trans. Jacqueline Kay in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship* (Princeton, 1995), p. 96.
[46] Samuels, *The Right to Difference*, pp. 38.
[47] Ibid., pp. 17 and 35.

French Jews were demanded to be assimilated.

Mutual Perspectives of Two Native Jews (Sephardim and Ashkenazim)

Jewish communities did not consider each other as identical in rights; instead, their attitudes alienated each other. The two major Jewish communities (Sephardim and Ashkenazim) each competed to achieve a superior position against the other. This rivalry was direct, especially during the French Revolution, when each community sent separate spokesmen and petitions to the Constituent Assembly.[48] The Sephardim who already had social privileges prior to emancipation, as well as broader political rights and more economic opportunities, tried to secure their superior positions and reputations against their brethren in the east. The Sephardi Jews saw themselves as acculturated elites and distinguished themselves from other Jews, but especially the Alsatian Jews. In the late eighteenth century, Jewish deputies of Bordeaux submitted a report to Malesherbes, a minister of state, which emphasised that he must not consider the Sephardim and Ashkenazim as identical. In the report, they wrote:

> The Germans (Ashkenazim) almost everywhere have long beards; their dress distinguishes them everywhere they live; the Portuguese (themselves), on the other hand, except for their religious belief, differ in no respect from the peoples among whom they live; they adopt their manners and customs. A Portuguese Jew is English in England and French in France, but a German Jew is German everywhere with regard to his customs….[49]

[48] Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', pp. 137.
[49] Mémoire remis par les Députés des Juifs de Bordeaux à Monsieur de Malesherbes, Ministre d'État (1788), as

Another statement of Isaac de Pinto indicates Sephardi attitudes. Replying to Voltaire, de Pinto wrote:

> A Portuguese Jew from Bordeaux and a German Jew from Metz seem to be two absolutely different beings… Monsieur de Voltaire cannot be unaware of the scrupulous fastidiousness exercised by Portuguese and Spanish Jews in order to not be mixed, by marriage, or other alliance, with Jews of other Nations.[50]

Additionally, the Sephardi Jews emphasised the differences between themselves and Ashkenazim. The Sephardim referenced their own nobility, as descendants of Iberian noble families, arguing in the same report:

> The Spanish and Portuguese Jews are persuaded that they are the issue of the tribe of Judah; it is known that this tribe held the highest rank among the others… the idea [of being descended from Judah]… could only confer upon them that distinction and contribute to that elevation of sentiment that have been remarked in them and that their brethren of other nations seem to have recognized.[51]

Sephardim did not simply intend to differentiate themselves from the Ashkenazim, but rather they considered themselves superior in nature to their eastern cousins.

---

presented in *Documents inédits sur l'entrée des Juifs dans la société française (1750-1850)*, ed. Renée Neher-Bernheim (Tel-Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 1977), Vol. I, p. 233, cited in Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. *5*.

[50] 1781. Cited in Patrick Girard, *Les Juifs de France de 1789 à 1860* (Paris, 1976), p. 26-30, cited in Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', pp. 137.

[51] Mémoire remis par les Députés des Juifs de Bordeaux à Monsieur de Malesherbes, Ministre d'État (1788), as presented in *Documents inédits sur l'entrée des Juifs dans la société française (1750-1850)*, ed. Renée Neher-Bernheim (Tel-Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 1977), Vol. I, p. 233, cited in Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 5.

Against the Sephardi Jews who blamed the Ashkenazi Jews for failing to assimilate, the Ashkenazi Jews considered the Sephardi Jews irreligious and lacking in faith. More simply put, they regarded their more assimilated brethren as 'traitors' of Judaism. After the emancipation, the rivalry intensified between the Sephardim and Ashkenazim during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries although both Jewish communities were equal under the law. The Ashkenazi Jewish attitude that the Sephardi Jews were heretical continued to grow. This manifested when Abraham Furtado, a notable Portuguese Jew, ran for the presidency of the assembly. They claimed:

> Portuguese Jews were suspect among all their coreligionists, who considered them apostates. More than anyone else, President Furtado was the object of suspicion… The rabbis from Alsace and from the former country of Avignon, who ranked highest in their knowledge, said of their president that it was clear that everything he knew about the Bible he had learned from Voltaire.[52]

Ashkenazi Jews began to actively integrate into French society during the nineteenth century; Sephardi Jews viewed a large number of Ashkenazi Jews who started to integrate as infiltrating their social and political positions. The Sephardim were eager to retain their social and political standing against the Ashkenazim during the Napoleonic period. Indeed, they feared losing their hegemony among France's Jewish communities; they strongly opposed the Consistoire imposed by Napoleon in 1808. David Gradis emphasised this in his speech in June 1806 before the Société de Bienfaisance, which was a welfare society founded by the Bordeaux community. He argued:

---

[52] Frances Malino, *Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux*, 65-88, cited in Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France*, pp. 35.

> Bordeaux and Bayonne Jews believe, in what concerns them in particular, they do not need any new organisation other than a simple regulation of internal policing that is more or less similar to the one that the last kings of France granted them, in order to better provide for the needs of their poor.

Benjamin Rodrigues, a Portuguese Jew living in Paris, reconfirmed the Sephardim fear toward the majority Ashkenazim, claiming: "It was to be desired that the central consistory be composed of Spanish and Portuguese Jews."[53]

The anxiety of the Sephardim appeared in the field of economy as well. During the mid-nineteenth century, the Rothschilds family who originated from the east, became central figures in national and international banking.[54] This also led the Sephardim to worry about their positions, since the more easterly Ashkenazim were clearly infiltrating economic positions originally held almost exclusively by Sephardim. The work of Jules Isaac Mirès reflects the community's unfavourable attitude toward the Ashkenazim. Mirès was a Jewish banker from Bordeaux and helped establish the *Crédit Mobilier and furnaces* near Marseilles. Against the rapid rise of the Rothschilds family, Mirès distinguished the Sephardim from the Ashkenazim:

> "We must distinguish the northern Jews from the Midi ones…. In Germany, Jews do not associate their fortune and wealth with that of the state they live in. [However] the Midi Jews known as Portuguese Jews have drawn on their Latin roots whence reside their more noble instincts…. The Rothschilds' interest has never corresponded to the French interest…. They have rebelled against all

[53] Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France*, pp. 35.
[54] James Mayer de Rothschild who founded a branch of the Rothschild family in France was born in Frankfurt-am-Main which was a region of the Holy Roman Empire.

assistance to industry or the state…. Along with the Pereires, however, the Midi Jews have made the general interest their main goal by obtaining all the benefits of credit and industry."[55]

In spite of the Sephardi Jews' efforts to secure power in French society and the country's economy, as Nancy Green argues in her study, a number of the Ashkenazi Jews moved to Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century after achieving the rights of French citizenry. Although Parisian Jews already existed, these Ashkenazi – or Alsatian – Jews became 'Parisian' or 'French' Jews.[56] Ashkenazi Jews soon achieved hegemony as a large number of them moved to the capital and were joined by other important Jewish banking families from central Europe. This rise of bourgeois Ashkenazi Jews accelerated their hegemony among French Jewish communities.

French Perspectives Towards the Two Jewish Communities

Before discussing French perspectives toward the two major Jewish communities, it is necessary to first understand that anti-Semitism pervaded French society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It existed in diverse ways, including religious or secular perspectives. For example, French Catholic clergymen did not agree with granting civil rights to any French Jews. Moreover, although the Sephardi Jews received comparatively more

[55] Jules Mirès, *A Mes Juges* (Paris, 1861), cited in Pierre Birnbaum, 'Between Social and Political Assimilation', p. 103. Sephardi Jews in France often called Ashkenazi Jews "northern" or "eastern" Jews as most lived in the northeastern part of France. Here, Mirès seemed to indicate the Ashkenazi Jews by calling them "northern Jews". The Pereires were Jewish financiers in Paris in the nineteenth century, originally coming from a Sephardi Jewish community.

[56] Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', pp. 137 and 140.

privileges and rights, they were still restricted when it came to living in cities or entering certain occupations. Even after 1791, French Jews were never completely free from anti-Semitic policies and sentiments; French society entertained considerably different attitudes pertaining to the Sephardim and Ashkenazim. This was exacerbated by emancipation not being granted to Jewish communities at the same time.

The two distinctive Jewish communities were considered heterogeneous in French society in terms of the degree of assimilation. The emancipation of the Sephardim did not give new rights, but rather it was a promise to continue their rights and privileges they had already enjoyed for decades. Isaac-René-Guy Le Chapelier, a deputy to the Estates General in the revolutionary period, confirmed this when he argued: "There is no connection between the Jews of Bordeaux (Sephardim) and those of Alsace (Ashkenazim); for the former, the issue is to conserve their rights; for the latter, to give them something they do not have."[57] Additionally, Pierre Birnbaum in *Jewish Destines: Citizenship, State and Community in Modern France* describes the Bordeaux Jews in French society, detailing their socio-cultural positions in modern France between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Birnbaum shows one report submitted to the prefect confirms that the Sephardi Jews were 'well-integrated' into French society. It says:

> Since most members of well-to-do Jewish families receive the same education as Christian, their habits are the same, and so are their career choices and recreational activities… they invariably mingle with Christians, and it would be hard to tell them apart were it not for certain distinctive facial features of the

[57] *Archives parlementaires*, 10: 365, cited in Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity*, pp. 23.

Jews….[58]

The Ashkenazim, on the other hand, continued to face unwelcome sentiments, many of which were very anti-Semitic. Their emancipation was one and half years later than the Sephardim, but additionally granting equal civic rights was not welcomed by some French citizens during the Revolution. The hostility towards the Ashkenazi Jews was not a sudden event at the dawn of the revolutionary period. Peter Kenez explains the ubiquity of local anti-Semitic sentiments: "The local inhabitants regarded the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Alsace as fundamentally inassimilable, a nation within a nation."[59] Mainstream French society's negative attitudes toward Ashkenazi Jews remained even after emancipation. Up until the early nineteenth century, French locals differentiated them from the Sephardi Jews who they already considered well-integrated and assimilated.

In the mid-nineteenth century, French locals in the eastern part of the country continued to exhibit hostile attitudes towards their Jewish neighbours. For example, local Frenchmen of the commune de Horbourg in the Haut-Rhin region sent a report that demanded the local authorities transform a Jewish school into a public school in 1835. In the report, they pointed out the 'problem' of assimilation by mentioning how Jewish schools did not properly offer French language classes. They additionally emphasised that teachers should follow civic law and satisfy public expectations. They continued in a subsequent report, describing that there were many Jewish schools in the region, but few municipal schools. They argued that this would allow Jewish families to continue to send their children to Jewish schools rather than

[58] "Situation Générale des individus qui professent la religion israélite," quoted in Jean Cavignac, "Les Israélites bordelais au XIXe siècle," unpublished thesis, University of Bordeaux III, 1986, pp. 641-42, cited in Birnbaum, *Jewish Destines*, pp. 37.
[59] Peter Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust: From Antisemitism to Genocide* (New York, 2013). pp. 20.

Christian schools with very few exceptions.[60] French locals seemed to worry that this would leave their Jewish neighbours 'less assimilated', confirming negative sentiments that Jews were 'a nation within nation'.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ashkenazi Jews became widely recognised as a major group Paris, the capital of France. By this time, Ashkenazim were sometimes considered well-integrated into French society considering as many of them spoke fluent French and appreciated French culture (though not all; as there were less-assimilated Jewish communities in the eastern region, such as Metz, in the 1870s). However, they were not completely free from anti-Semitic sentiment from the rest of French society. Anti-German sentiment was conflated with anti-Semitism, which was particularly widespread after the significant defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-71. Many Jews living in Alsace and Lorraine preferred to emigrate to France or Algeria rather than live under German control after the signing of the Treaty of Frankfurt. As explored in the next chapter, the Dreyfus Affair revealed mixed feelings of French society regarding Jews. This especially pertained to those who came from the eastern part of the nation, such as Alsace-Lorraine.

Becoming '*Israélite*' in French Society

The two major Jewish communities of France slowly converged throughout the nineteenth century. Emancipation was the first step to stop Jewish groups being categorised differently in France, although the differentiation did not disappear suddenly. As they were unrestricted in terms of occupations or living in certain areas, they could have more contact with each other

[60] Document, 8 May 1835 and Document, 4 June 1835, F/17 12516/2, Archives Nationales.

than before. Moreover, emancipation made them equal to other French nationals in terms of civil law, allowing them to more easily integrate into French society than they did during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. According to Benbassa's argument, two wars – the Franco-Prussian War and the Great War – transitioned two different Jewish groups into one collective group that became known as the israélites. The defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War and loss of the region of Alsace-Lorraine fuelled the rise of anti-Semitism and the extreme right. The rise of anti-Semitism and anti-republican extreme right naturally harmed persistent republican values, such as liberty, equality and fraternity, through arguing that the republic had been constructing French society with values contained in Judaism, but also prompted Jewish communities to band together in a common defence.[61] Decades later, the experience of the Great War brought not only Jews and French nationals, but also different Jewish communities, together into a collective-group whose patriotism was loudly proclaimed.[62]

Following these war-time experiences, a massive influx of foreign Jews in the later nineteenth century opened another rift, no longer between Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities but between 'French Jews' against 'non-French Jews'. These foreign Jews fled to France for political and economic reasons, largely linked to persecution in eastern Europe. Native-born French Jews assumed that these foreign Jews would damage the public reputations that had taken centuries to build in France, so they did not want to be associated with the newcomers; instead, the israélites consolidated their community identity as one that was native to France, rather than associated with the 'Other'.

[61] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 125.
[62] Ibid., pp. 126.

Mass Migration of Foreign Jews

Fleeing home and heading to France

Internal friction of Jews in France never disappeared even after native French Jewish communities regenerated as 'israélite' during the second half of the nineteenth century. Political disturbances and economic depression across Europe drove many Jews to migrate to France which was considered relatively safer and more open to refugees. Different Jewish groups, particularly those coming from the East, settled in France in the six decades before the Second World War. Although an exact timing is unclear for when Eastern European Jews began moving to France, a massive wave of immigration started from the 1880s. A substantial number of Jewish migrants arriving in a short period resulted in the creation of a distinctive Jewish community in France, which did not integrate or assimilate – either forcibly or voluntarily – into French society or the existing French Jewish community. Although there were certainly individual immigrants who succeeded in integrating into French or *israélite* society, a large number of them continued to live their life as they were in their countries of origin and formed a distinctive Jewish community known as the *juifs*. The *juif* community had their own social organisations, institutions, culture, and political identity, distinguished from their coreligionists, *israélites*. Friction between the *israélite* and *juif* community quickly became visible and intense as experienced by both Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews.

The first mass arrival of Jewish immigrants, particularly from central and eastern Europe, occurred during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Jewish migrants did not suddenly appear after the 1880s. Even though there were only a handful of them, there was definitely immigration throughout the nineteenth century. In 1863, a group of Polish Jews arrived in Paris with other Polish migrants, fleeing from Russian Empire's harsh reprisals

followed after the failure of the Polish revolt, known as the January Uprising, in the same year.[63] By 1880, a few thousand Jews had migrated to France, mostly from Germany.[64] From the 1880s, however, the number of Jewish immigrants exploded in France. Economic backwardness and political repression after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881 and pogroms throughout the empire ignited the Jewish migration westward.[65] Continuous horrendous pogroms in the Russian empire and in Romania between the 1880s and 1900s accelerated the escape of the Jewish population to west. There were some eight thousand Russian, Galician and Romanian Jewish refugees who escaped to Paris, particularly to the Marais in the 1880s.[66] Zuccotti provides a specific number for 1881 and 1882, suggesting that there were approximately 7,000 to 8,000 impoverished Russian, Romanian and Galician Jews who migrated to France.[67]

It is important to note that there was not only foreign Jewish migration in the late nineteenth century. There was migration of French Jews during the 1880s: Jews of Alsace and Lorraine. Although they achieved a status of French citizenry after the French Revolution, they became refugees in Germany after the region of Alsace and Lorraine was annexed to the German Empire following the Franco-Prussian War. Many Jews of Alsace and Lorraine left their homes since they did not want to give up their French citizenship. They recognised the menace of German anti-Semitism which they considered stronger and more threatening than anti-Semitism in France. This was one of the critical reasons they moved to France, expecting that they would be more protected in the republic under the republican values. Hoping to seek

---

[63] Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', p. 140.
[64] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 11.
[65] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 3.
[66] Pierre Birnbaum, 'Between Social and Political Assimilation', pp. 111.
[67] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp.11.

a new life on French territory, they were nevertheless not welcomed in France right after the war. Not only were there existing anti-Semitic attitudes towards the Alsatian Jews, but the catastrophic military defeat in the Franco-Prussian War exacerbated the already strong anti-Semitic sentiment, because these refugee Jews with Alsatian roots spoke Yiddish, German or French with German accents or intonations.[68] This amplified their foreign image and reminded the French population of their traumatic defeat. At the height of anti-Semitic feeling, the French stamped them as German and traitors of the *Patrie*. This strong political anti-Semitic feeling became even stronger after the Dreyfus Affair, when a Jewish captain was falsely accused of treason in 1894, which peaked anti-Semitism in French society.

The considerable influx of migration continued into the following century. There were about 175,000 to 200,000 Jewish immigrants who arrived in France not only from Eastern Europe, such as Poland, but also from other regions in Europe, for example, Spain and Italy, between 1906 and 1939.[69] These Jewish immigrants left their home for political safety and economic opportunities. First, there was a group of Sephardi Jewish immigrants from Southern Europe; they were already familiar with French culture through the Alliance Israélite Universelle.[70] Another important group of Jewish immigrants were those who were from Eastern Europe. Many Russian Jewish migrants continued to move to France. Massacres of Jews in Kishinev (modern day Chișinău, Moldova's capital) and Zhitomir (a city of modern-day Ukraine) and the failure of the 1905 revolution prompted the Jews to leave.[71] The series of revolutions which erupted in Russia between 1905 and 1917, and the pogroms which followed on from political instability, forced the Russian Jews to leave for the West. Already

[68] Ibid., pp. 12.
[69] Benbassa. *The Jews of France*, pp. 148.
[70] Adler, *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution*, pp. 4.
[71] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 3.

before the First World War, there was a significant number of foreign Jewish migrants in the capital of France. For example, one Russian association called "*Bureau du Travail*" that assisted incoming Russian migrants to find jobs shows that 80 per cent of migrants from Russia were Jews during the early twentieth century. In 1911, the association provides more specific statistics on the motivation of migration among recent migrants. The document demonstrated that fifty-three per cent of migrants who belonged to revolutionary parties or were considered 'insurrectionary' people, were categorised as "political migrants" and the other, which is almost half, was categorised as "economic migrants", who left Russia due to a miserable economic situation.[72] According to David Weinberg's work, the number of eastern European Jewish immigrants came to more than 20,000, which was two-fifths of the entire Jewish population in Paris right before the First World War.[73] Jewish migration continued after the Great War and Paris stayed as an attractive destination for more Jewish migrants from Russia and other Eastern European countries; 70,000 or so immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe settled in the City of Light between the year of 1920 and 1930.[74] Assuming that the French government needed more manpower to reconstruct the nation after the First World War, it was easier for refugee Jews to move to France. This facilitated a French immigration policy more open to migrants.

As soon as the Nazis seized power and expanded their political influence after 1933, anti-Semitism in German society gained support rapidly. Many German Jews decided to flee westwards. Some of them settled in France, escaping from the imminent danger in Germany. It was relatively easy for these refugees (both Jewish and non-Jewish refugees) to migrate to

[72] Document, 23 February 1912, BA 1708 7023-H-5, The Archives of the Préfecture de Police.
[73] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 3
[74] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 148.

France, as the French government did not request visas. This attracted an additional 25,000 Germans, 85 percent of whom were Jewish refugees, to migrate to France by the end of 1933 when the Nazis grabbed absolute power.[75] The Nazis exacerbated the situation through introducing discriminatory legislation, such as the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 which categorised Jews by race, and political terrors, such as *Kristallnacht* in 1938. As a result, roughly 50,000 more migrants who were anti-Nazi and left-wing refugees, of whom more than half were Jewish migrants, passed through France between 1933 and 1939. Some 10,000 of them decided to settle down in France.[76] On the eve of the Second World War, a significant number of Jewish refugees had settled in France, coming from various countries such as Poland, Germany, Austria, Russia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia due to harsh persecution. According to Serge Klarsfeld in his famous work, *Vichy-Auschwitz*, there were some 330,000 Jewish people in Metropolitan France by the Second World War. From this number, there were 190,000 to 200,000 native Jews, 55,000 naturalised foreign Jews and 140,000 foreign Jews.[77] Even before the Second World War broke out, there were strong pockets of anti-Semitic and xenophobic sentiment. After France was swiftly defeated by Nazi Germany, they were 'officially' discriminated in both occupied and unoccupied zones of France.

Daily Life of *juif* in France

Jewish newcomers formed an ethnic island in Paris. They often continued their

[75] Vicki Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered', *The Journal of Modern History*, 70, no. 1 (1998), p. 30.
[76] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp.25.
[77] Patrick Weil, 'De l'affaire Dreyfus à l'Occupation", in Déhan-Rotschild et Morhange (eds.) *Les Juifs de France*, p. 108.

religious and traditional lifestyles as they practised in their home countries. They opened not only small stores and workshops but also founded their own synagogues. Having synagogues was especially significant because their communal life in eastern Europe was formed around the synagogue.[78] With a well-known area, the *Pletzl*, where the majority of foreign Jews resided, there were the two other areas of the city that many Jewish immigrants lived. Though it was not thoroughly delineated, the *Pletzl* played a greater role as the religious centre than the two other areas. The area called *Belleville*, stretching between the nineteenth and twentieth *arrondissement*, was the economic centre of the immigrant community, attracting numerous artisans and working-class people. In addition, this naturally made the area a central point of left-wing activities for the immigrant population. The other place was the second economic hub covering a region from the Bastille to the Place de la Républic. Shops and *Ateliers* (workshops) were concentrated, selling the clothing and trading textiles with a number of Jewish employees.[79] David Weinberg points out that this geographical concentration resulted in the reinforcement of religious and ethnic tradition, which consolidated the new Jewish community. Additionally, settling apart from the native French Jews who tended to move to the western part of Paris intensified the internal friction between the groups which would endure for decades. Native French Jews feared that the formation of "ghettos" would increase the "visibility" of Jews and, therefore, would harm their reputation and increase anti-Semitic feeling.[80]

The spectrum of occupations they had in France appeared distinctive from the professional profile of native French Jews. Arthur Ruppin provides specific statistics of their

[78] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 28.
[79] Ibid., pp. 5.
[80] Ibid., pp. 6.

jobs in Paris in 1910. He demonstrates, out of 16,060 Jewish immigrants in Paris, 71.4 per cent were in the clothing industry, 16.8 per cent involved in the metal industry (e.g., plumbers and watchmakers), 6.2 per cent were in wood industry, 3.7 per cent were leatherworkers, and 1.9 percent had other occupations. From the highest ratio of the occupation, the clothing industry, there were tailors, hatters, fur workers and cobblers.[81] There were, of course, other occupations, such as businessmen or doctors. Unlike almost fifty per cent of native French Jews involved in large scale business, less than fifteen to twenty per cent of immigrants were in the commercial section in the 1930s. Some sixty per cent of Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe engaged in industry or artisan trades. Moreover, 50,000 immigrants, which was eighty-three per cent of the total, worked in *ateliers* or as self-employed domestic labourers in the textile and garment trades.[82] Interestingly, the earlier immigrants, usually from Russia, actively engaged in the realm of commerce, whether antiques and travel agencies; however, their businesses were still limited as they had a tendency to restrict their customers to other immigrant Jews.[83] However, later arrivals were usually poor and tended to be unskilled. The lack of French language skills, additionally, did not allow them to easily assess to other spectrum of occupations. This made a large population of immigrant Jews engage in small crafts, artisan trades, shop-keeping, or manual work. Connected to their attraction to radical ideologies such as socialism and communism, the occupations of immigrants deepened the perception of these Jews as proletarians, which made them foreign from the political perspective of both non-Jewish French and native French Jews. This brought another strong anti-Semitic stereotype, especially

[81] Arthur Ruppin, *Les Juifs dans le monde Moderne*, trans. M. Chevalley (Paris: Payot, 1934), p. 188, cited in Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 113.
[82] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 11.
[83] Ibid., pp. 13.

from the perspective of the French Right.

Several organisations were actively formed among the foreign Jews and played an important role in shaping their social life. Various organisations were created, covering religious bodies, social welfare institutions, labour unions and political organisations. Being unwelcome immigrants in poor conditions, they formed mutual aid organisations, such as *Landsmanshaften*, that provided medical aid, loan services and funeral arrangements as well as religious services.[84] Several social institutions actively operated among the foreign Jews. For example, several pre-World War I organisations, such as the *Université Populaire Juive* and the *Asile de Nuit* that played a role of day-care centre for newly arrived immigrants. The organisation known as the *Fédération des Sociétés Juives de Paris*, which was composed of more than twenty immigrant aid societies, continued for decades, as it was recreated as the *Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France* having fifty to ninety mutual aid societies after the First World War.[85] In spite of its decentralised structure, they successfully managed to provide aid to the foreign Jews in the 1930s. For example, in the year of 1935, the total budget for many charitable activities reached 3,000,000 francs, which was approximately twice the budget of consistory. They also ran educational institutions, such as a so-called Popular University and an immigrant library in Paris. They provided Jewish-related courses, such as Jewish history and literature. In addition, there was a huge collection of different languages of instruction, for example, Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Polish, German and French.[86]

It is noteworthy that the nature of their political organisations was sometimes different

[84] Birnbaum, 'Between Social and Political Assimilation', pp. 111-112.
[85] Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', p. 147.
[86] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 30.

from those of the assimilated French Jews. Apart from their religious beliefs, organisations covered diverse political ideologies, from Zionist to Communist, Socialist, and anarchist. They published their own press and had public meetings. For example, the immigrant Communists founded their own organisations, youth groups and cultural committees, and published a daily newspaper, the *Naie Presse*, in late 1933.[87] This made them quite visible among French locals and perpetuated the image of 'unassimilable' foreigners. In French society, the Eastern European Jewish immigrants were not well regarded; they were viewed as revolutionary agitators or anarchists to French society. Esther Benbassa points out this perception of the immigrants was partly related to the development of modern anti-Semitism in France.[88]

Reactions of Non-Jewish Migrants

Another conflict occurred after a large number of foreign Jews moved to France. The hostility towards foreign Jews not only came from the French nationals and their French brethren. There appeared anti-Semitic feeling among the other immigrants at the time. As political and economic refugees arrived in France, especially Paris, they had to compete with foreign Jewish residents socially and economically. Instead of political conflicts between non-Jewish and Jewish migrants, economic conflict was more common. Antipathy of Russian migrants towards the Russian Jewish migrants shows this suspicion. In 1913, there was a strike of Russian bakery workers against bakeries run by Russian Jews. The *Bureau du Travail*, the Russian organisation for helping Russian laborers and workers, supported these workers and decided to boycott Russian Jewish bakeries, arguing they exploited their workers. Subsequently,

[87] Ibid., pp. 33.
[88] Benbassa, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 134.

they listed six names of bakery owners running a business in Paris, stamping them 'targeted' bakeries for boycott.[89] Competition and anti-Semitism that the foreign Jews experienced in their home countries followed them to France, as a number of non-Jewish migrants also moved to France and retained their negative attitudes towards Jews.

Impact of Mass Migration and Responses

Reactions of French Society – The Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism

The birth of modern anti-Semitism was inevitably related to political incidents and crises in the Third Republic during the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. It is doubtless true that the anti-Semitic sentiment towards French Jews existed before the modern period. Pre-modern anti-Semitism depended more on a religious perspective than later developments. Modern anti-Semitism in France, however, appeared from diverse perspectives. The modern anti-Semitism of France did not only emphasise racist ideas exclusively, but also French anti-Semites criticised Jews from political, social and cultural perspectives.[90] The influx of foreign Jews accelerated the rise of modern anti-Semitism. These poor and foreign refugees brought another image of Jewry and often strengthened the existing anti-Semitic stereotypes, such as being unassimilable, unhygienic, less-civilised, Bolshevik, and foreign. As the native French Jews tended to be criticised in the anti-Semitic press as members of the greedy bourgeoisie, the two incompatible images of Jews appeared in modern France. This resulted in many groups blaming Jews in France for an incompatible variety of things, from heartless capitalism to the communist menace. There was not a single reason or stereotype that provoked a revival of the

[89] Document, 15 March 1913, BA 1708 7023-H-5, The Archives of the Préfecture de Police.
[90] Venita Datta, *The Birth of a National Icon* (Albany, 1999), pp. 87.

anti-Semitic sentiment; a series of events let anti-Semites justify their hatred. Political and economic crises, such as the Panama Scandal, the Dreyfus Affair, the Great War, economic depression and polarisation of French politics put Jewish communities in jeopardy. With these domestic and international crises and the rapid increase of foreign Jewish population, modern anti-Semitic ideas were intensified from the late nineteenth century. To the eyes of French society, particularly anti-Semites, the massive migration of East European Jews was considered an intrusion on their society and they regarded them newcomers as being interconnected to political, societal and economic problems in French society.

The influx of immigrants in a short period made them more visible to the locals; particularly, their concentration in the capital attracted locals' attention. Connected to political instability and the failure of the French Third Republic, the right-wing often borrowed anti-Semitic narratives to connect the Republic to Jews and criticise them together at the same time. This produced two results to the Jews of France. On one hand, the native French Jews were targeted by anti-Semites, although they were regarded as well-integrated into French society at the late nineteenth century. Many native French Jews succeeded in assimilating – in some cases, even converting out of their religion – however, viewed as influential statesmen and businessmen, they were still blamed for 'ruining' the Republic, and betraying national interests. On the other hand, the rapid increase of the Jewish population made them more visible in French society. This led them to become easy scapegoats for certain dire problems in French society. The continuous influx of migrants was sometimes used as an effective weapon for the extreme Right, such as Édouard Drumont, to attract the dissatisfied masses in the Third French Republic. Whatever were the problems, whether they were political or economic, the populist radical Right simply argued that they were caused by Jews. For example, victims of depression,

such as farmers, shopkeepers and artisans, were attracted to blaming Jews in France, especially rich Jewish banking families.[91]

The growth of the anti-Semitic atmosphere temporarily slowed down during the First World War, due to an active participation of Jews in the armies of national solidarity, the Union sacré. Nonetheless, it did not disappear forever. At the height of the nationalist feeling during the First World War, foreign Jews were blamed for not joining the war actively, although in reality they were enlisted in the French army. For example, Russian Jews were harshly criticised during war time. There were, for instance, anti-Semitic protests in Paris during the summer of 1915. Wives and mothers of French soldiers criticised Russian Jews for not fighting in the war. They protested that Russian Jews were shirking their military and civic duty while French men were sacrificing themselves at the same time. Henri Galli, a conservative municipal councillor who complained about foreign Jews over many years, reproached them: "While all our children are in the army spilling their blood on the battle field, their very presence in Paris is scandalous, a provocation!"[92]

According to Caron's study, initial reactions of the French government and public on refugees from Germany after 1933 were extremely positive. During the 1930s, the French government lifted normal visa restrictions and permitted refugees to enter France without appropriate visas. They were supposed to simply report their entrance to the police in twenty days.[93] More refugee immigrants came over France and anti-Semitic feelings became stronger, intertwined with the political and economic crises during the 1930s. For example, the Stavisky

[91] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 12-13.
[92] "Vœu relatif aux étrangers, résidant en France, en âge de servir et munis de permis de séjour," Cons. Mun., *Proc.-ver*. (17 November 1915), 502-3, cited in Clifford Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca, 2006). pp. 44.
[93] Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s', pp. 29.

Affair that happened between 1933 and 1934 was a financial scandal named after the Russian Jew who was its chief protagonist, which reinforced connections between Jews and political corruption.[94] Subsequently, French hostility to Jews and stereotypes around the image of the Judeo-Bolshevik menace, as repeated in the international conspiracy theory, casting French Jews as unassimilable foreigners.

Contemporary printed sources additionally demonstrate the mixed feeling of the French nationals. There were philo-Semitic voices from several periodicals, such as *La Juste Parole* published by Oscar de Férenzy or *La Question d'Israël* around the time of mass immigration. However, they were limited to protecting civic rights of certain groups of Jews, usually the native French Jews or those who satisfied their conservative values. Compared to the philo-Semitic reactions, the anti-Semitic reactions exploded with the mass migration of foreign Jews and huge political crises. Anti-Semitic newspapers, periodicals and magazines had already become popular in the late nineteenth century, and these anti-Semitic media directly expressed the hatred of Jews in France, including both assimilated Jews and foreign Jews. There were newspapers, such as *L'Anti-Juif* and *L'Antisémitique* in Paris and *Le Péril Social* in Montdidier, closely located in the north of Paris.[95] As an editor of a notorious anti-Semitic newspaper, *La Libre Parole*, Édouard Drumont published a two-volume book, *La France Juive*, scapegoating Jews for every single problem of the republic. Some 100,000 copies were sold by the end of 1886.[96] Influenced by the Panama Scandal and Dreyfus Affair, anti-Semitic newspapers continued to be more actively circulated in the 1890s. Interestingly, there was not only extreme right-wing attacks on Jews in France, but the Left also criticised

[94] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 154.
[95] Ibid., pp. 140.
[96] Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 13.

Jews for their own reasons, mostly based on a conventional image of the Jewish bourgeoisie. Anti-Semitic newspapers continued to be published against Jews, especially targeting the foreign Jews who came to France recently.

Impact on the Israélite Community

The influx of foreign Jews made the position of native French Jews ambivalent, caught between the non-Jewish French nationals and foreign Jews who arrived in France recently. Although numerous native French Jews succeeded economically and thrived in politics after their emancipation, they were still seen as foreign in French society. However, they were regarded as French compared to newly arriving Jews. As soon as foreign Jews arrived and were scapegoated for political, social and economic problems that existed in the Republic, the principal impression that the native French Jews had was fear. They were worried that their reputation in French society would be damaged together with their foreign coreligionists. Native French Jews who regarded themselves successfully integrating and assimilating into French society as French citizens did not want to be the target of the anti-Semitic attacks levelled at the foreign Jews. Having hoped for a welcoming *israélite* community and French society, the *juifs* were not welcomed as much as they expected. Foreign Jews already had recognised organisations ran or aided by the Parisian community before moving to Paris and they were additionally encouraged by their belief in receiving good welfare in France.[97] Despite the negative attitude of the native French Jewish community, it is important to note that not all native French Jews were indifferent towards immigrant Jews. The native French

[97] Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', pp. 143.

Jewish community often provided assistance to their brethren: for example, the Central Consistory assisted Russian Jews to regularise their marital status.[98]

The primary attitude of the native French Jews towards immigrants, however, appeared negatively in two ways. On one hand, the native French Jews did not want to be associated with them whatsoever and they wanted to be regarded as a different – and well-assimilated – Jewish community. The division between the native Jewish community and foreign Jewish community appears more visibly in the capital during the 1930s. More native French Jews moved to the western part of Paris with some immigrants who settled before the First World War.[99] This regional separation brought a clearer physical line between two Jewish communities. On the other hand, they tended to regard themselves as superior to immigrants. Assuming that their reputation would be harmed due to the abuse aimed at foreign Jews, they differentiated themselves by overly boasting of their 'superiority', which they thought to come from their mastery of French culture. This appeared in two ways. In one way, they attempted (and sometimes felt the 'obligation') to 'educate' and 'civilise' their coreligionists, who they considered 'unfortunates', such paternalistic schemes were already common within the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a Paris-based Jewish organisation founded in 1860. Hyman describes their attitude effectively: "Native Jews saw the immigrants as unfortunates who had to be raised from their inferior state and liberated from their primitive culture in order to be worthy of equality as members of the French Jewish community and as French citizens".[100] Paula Hyman explains that the Paris Consistory used their three parochial schools and supplementary religious courses as purveyors of the value of assimilation and as vehicles for

[98] Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 126.
[99] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 149.
[100] Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 126.

the making of good citizens.[101] In addition, this influx of migrants revived the rivalry among Jewish communities over who should administer to and organise community relief, which the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews had competed for a few decades prior. Not only seen as a superior group, the native French Jews wanted to keep their brethren under their control.

In the other way, some of the native French Jews openly displayed an extremely aggressive attitude towards their coreligionists from the East. For example, Bernard Lazare (1865-1903), who was from an established French Jewish family, showed an extreme prejudice against foreign Jews. As a writer and journalist, Lazare described the East European Jewish immigrants as "these predatory Tatars, coarse and dirty, who come in huge numbers to graze in a country which is not theirs."[102] Despite not all native French Jews displaying this attitude, hostility deepened the friction between the Jewish communities. This dictated each community's direction in politics as well. In the 1930s, as French politics turned more polarised between the right- and left-wing, Jewish communities in France also separated in a two-pronged way. Although not all native French Jews were radical assimilationists and conservatives, and not all foreign Jews were Zionists, there were visible tendencies separating them. Many israélites tended to stay on the conservative side of politics; some even supported the *Croix de Feu* (Cross of Fire in French) which was an extreme nationalist and anti-Semitic league in the interwar period, instead of joining 'Jewish Bolshevik' organisations of immigrant Jews.[103] The deep division between the Jewish communities resulted in different experiences that they had in interwar-period France. The negative responses of French nationals and native

[101] Ibid., pp. 128.
[102] Bernard Lazare, "La Solidarité juive," *Entretiens politiques et littéraires*, (September 1890): 222-32, 232, cited in Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 21.
[103] Green, 'Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities', pp. 148.

French Jews rendered foreign Jews vulnerable, upending the expectations they had before coming to France. Not only their physical vulnerability, such as political instability and economic difficulties, but their own Judaic identity was threatened, as they were expected to turn into 'proper' French citizens by radically assimilating. As a result, the hostile attitude drove the formation of the distinctive community of foreign Jews. Foreign Jews who represented the 4th and 11th arrondissements (where much of the immigrant Jewish population resided) requested the Consistory to have their own synagogue in July 1913, which linked to divides between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Another group of immigrants from the 12th arrondissement petitioned in December in the same year.[104] This demonstrated that they were traditional and very religious. In addition, this implied that their community was religiously distinctive from that of the assimilated French Jews, as they also often had different political ideas from the assimilated French Jews. As mentioned above, they formed social institutions, such as schools and social organisations. Additionally, they were more attracted to Zionist ideology.

[104] Ibid., pp. 145.

Chapter 2: Perspectives of Right-wing towards Jews: Philo-Semitism and Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism of Right-Wing

Introduction

Anti-Semitism revived in the French Third Republic. A series of political and social incidents strengthened an existing anti-Semitic-strand in public opinion. The Radical Right scapegoated French Jews for almost every scandal in the Republic, such as the Panama Affair beginning in 1892 and, of course, the Dreyfus Affair in 1894, the rapid growth of socialist ideology and continuous economic turmoil in the 1920s and 1930s, for example the Great Depression and the Stavisky Affair in 1935. The right-wing anti-Semites often argued that many economic and social problems in the Republic were intertwined and Jews were always engaged in them. They expressed their anti-Semitic views openly in many conservative press organs. Their anti-Semitic voices did not simply attack and criticise Jews, but this discourse also functioned to unite conservatives ever since the early period of the Third Republic. Zeev Sternhell has stressed that anti-Semitism played a role in shaking up the French public politically, but it also functioned to overcome the ideological differences among the disparate right-wing factions and worked to unite them into a coherent political platform.[105] Maurice Barrés' already recognised its potential to do this. In *L'Appel au soldat*, Maurice Barrés criticised General Boulanger for not supporting anti-Semitism and argued: "Boulanger must be

[105] Sternhell, 'The Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic', p. 111.

anti-Semitic precisely by virtue of it being a party of national reconciliation."[106]

Many anti-Semitic journals, newspapers and periodicals were continuously published and circulated in the five decades of the Third Republic, from the 1880s to 1930s. They were not solely anti-Semitic; rather, they shared different conservative ideas and values, such as, royalism, anti-parliamentarism, anti-Socialism, or ultra-nationalism. Zeev Sternhell has analysed these sentiments in his work, explaining the origins of anti-Semitism in the French Third Republic. For example, *Le Courrier de l'Est* was founded in 1889 by Maurice Barrés, who was an anti-Dreyfusard commentator. Several journals concentrated on attacking Jews; for instance, not only Drumont's notorious newspaper, *La Libre Parole*, his anti-Semitic book, *La France Juive*, and the Antisemitic League of France which he founded in 1889, but also there were *L'Antijuif*, a weekly newspaper founded by another anti-Dreyfusard Jules Guérin in 1898, and *L'Anti-youtre* (youtre is an ethnic slur in French towards Jews), another popular newspaper published by Emmanuel Gallian in 1891.[107] As briefly introduced in the previous chapter, *L'Antisémitique* and *Le Péril social* were other novel anti-Semitic newspapers, founded in Paris and Montdidier respectively (a commune located in the Somme department located in a northern part of France), although they did not last more than first few issues.[108]

A number of conservative newspapers in interwar France continued to express anti-Semitic attitudes which dominated in newspapers published before the First World War. Parisian and diverse regional editions of the Catholic journal *La Croix* and the *Pèlerin* were

---

[106] Maurice Barr*és, L'Appel au soldat, 464*, c*ited in* Sternhell, 'The Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic', p. 111.

[107] Sternhell, 'The Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic', p. 110 and Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*, pp. 13. and Sternhell, 'The Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic', p. 110.

[108] R. F. Byrnes, "Édouard Drumont and *La France Juive*," *Jewish Social Studies* 10 (April 1948): 172-173, cited in Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 140.

published in a total of 500,000 copies in July 1898.[109] The circulation of anti-Semitic newspapers and periodicals never disappeared up until the demise of the Third Republic. Anti-Semitic newspapers continued to be published, targeting both the native Jewish and immigrant foreign Jewish communities, as well as their perceived sympathies. There were forty-seven such newspapers and magazines in the 1930s. For example, about 60,000 copies of *Gringoire*, which was a weekly political newspaper that usually fostered right-wing nationalism and blamed Jews (and later became Vichyiste during the Second World War), were sold in 1936. Similarly, some 465,000 copies of *Candide*, which was a Maurrassist and anti-Semitic newspaper, were sold in the same year, and the infamous anti-Semitic newspaper, *Je suis partout* sold about 40,000 to 80,000 copies every week at the time.[110] *Je suis partout* continued to be published under the Vichy regime with other collaborating newspapers, such as *Au Pilori*, and *Le Cri du people*.[111]

In the final decades of the Third French Republic, French Jews, especially long-established Jews, succeeded in rising to high positions in public life. For example, they held high governmental offices, for example, Léon Blum became a Prime Minister in the 1936 and led Popular Front government with his other Jewish politicians such as, Georges Mandel, Pierre Mendès France, and Jules Moch. French Jews were also able to rise to high military ranks. Some twenty-five Jews became generals over the span of the French Third Republic.[112] For example, in 1934, Edmond Bloch, a former general during the First World War, created a

---

[109] Yves Lequin, "Dreyfus à l'usine? Le silence d'une mémoire," in Pierre Birnbaum, ed., La France de l'affaire Dreyfus (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 390, cited in Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 141.

[110] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 154-155. Maurrassisme was a counter-revolutionary doctrine by Charles Maurras who was one of the prominent leaders of the *Action française* movement which was one of the far-right movements in the Third French Republic.

[111] Stephen A. Schuker, 'Origins of the "Jewish Problem" in the Later Third Republic', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 142.

[112] Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society & Politics*, pp. 5.

patriotic association, *L'Union Patriotique des Français Israélite*, that had some fifteen hundred members.[113] Nonetheless, conservative anti-Semites continued to suspect their French national identity, and never stopped vilifying their Jewish identity and political orientation at the same time.

Anti-Semitism in Conservative Presses

Anti-Semitic voices exploded in the time of the Dreyfus Affair, which occurred three years after the Panama Scandal. Many right-wing newspapers attacked Jews beyond blaming Dreyfus himself. According to Nancy Fitch's article, *Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France*, many small sensationalist newspapers used visual images. *La Croix* included many anti-Semitic cartoons in almost every paper.[114] *Psst…!* was one of the anti-Dreyfusard newspapers that was circulated in the capital of France. Although it did not last long as it existed between 1898 and 1899 its unprecedented format filled with anti-Semitic caricature became popular and caught more attention among the French reading public. Jean-Louis Forain, an anti-Dreyfusard caricaturist and the co-founder of *Psst…!* with Caran d'Ache, boasted that their motivation in creating this newspaper was to target Jews in general, without making any individual distinctions. When he had an interview with Gaston Méry who was an important figure from *La Libre Parole*, Forain harshly criticised Dreyfusards and Jews and he seemed to argue that the "Dreyfus Syndicate" and Jews corrupted the French nation. He described "feeling of disgust

[113] William B. Cohen and Irwin M. Wall, 'French Communism and the Jews', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 85.
[114] Nancy Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France', *The American Historical Review*, 97 No. 1 (1992), p. 62.

and indignation that the Syndicate's odious tactics kindled in us… It's the Jews who have done all this dirty work. And really, they've gone too far."[115] Moreover, right wing's anti-Semitism in the end of the nineteenth century did not only attack all the Jews in general, but they made a sweeping criticism and attacked the Republic as they scapegoated that it was 'ruining' the true France. Forain criticised Jews in even stronger terms in another interview with another nationalist newspaper, *La Patrie*: "From the start of this odious campaign undertaken by a criminal conspiracy – infamously known as the Dreyfus Syndicate – we have felt, Caran d'Ache and I, that our duty was to take the field and fight, in our own way, this cosmopolitan troupe that, like a slow but pervasive poison, seeps into the mind and body of the French nation so as to corrupt it with insidious doctrines, to steal it, and vilest of crimes, to try to dishonour it… Everyone, to the best of their ability, must do their duty."[116] Not only *Psst…!*, many other local newspapers with countless anti-Semitic cartoons or caricature were circulated in rural areas around the time of the Dreyfus Affair. This was a crucial moment that anti-Semitism gained support not just in the capital. Nancy Fitch points out: "Without these materials, the Dreyfus Affair would never have come into the countryside. Very few peasants had any direct contact with Jews, for of the estimated 71,000 Jews in the country in 1897, 45,000 lived in Paris."[117] Many anti-Semitic visual images were circulated beyond newspapers and periodicals. For example, children were exposed to anti-Semitic images through chocolate wraps which were decorated with popular Catholic and anti-Semitic figures. Stories of the Dreyfus Affair

[115] Gaston Mery, "Au jour le jour," *La Libre Parole*, 6 February 1898, 1, cited in Elizabeth Everton, 'Line and Shadow: Envisioning Anti-Dreyfusism in *Psst…!'*, in Maya Balakirsky Katz (ed.), *Revising Dreyfus* (Leidon, 2013), p. 230.
[116] A. Guignery, "Interview de Forain. Psst! Psst!," *La Patrie*, 6 February 1898, 1, cited in Elizabeth Everton, "Line and Shadow', in Katz (ed.) *Revising Dreyfus*, p. 230-231.
[117] Fitch, 'Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism', pp. 67.

were sometimes depicted in cigarette papers.[118]

Anti-Semitism became more popular in interwar France. Many French Jews who engaged in French politics in that period sided with the left, most visibly Léon Blum. The anti-Semitic conservatives attributed Jews to several domestic problems that the Republic faced, such as the economic depression and decline of its military power.[119] Anti-Semitic sentiments concentrated on the Prime Minister Blum after he became Prime Minister in 1936. They criticised Blum's policies and often presented the harshest criticism. The Munich Crisis shocked the French public, especially the right-wing nationalists. Even though Blum accepted rearmament in 1936 and introduced a rearmament programme immediately, this fact did not stop the anti-Semites from attacking him, his coreligionists in his cabinet and the cabinet itself for the decline of French military power. *L'Action française* insisted: "If these cannibals persist long enough to make us heroes, we need to direct our first bullet to Mandel, Blum and Reynaud."[120] Xavier Vallat, who later collaborated with the Vichy regime and Nazi Germany as a head of the Commissariat géneral aux questions juives (Commissariat-General for Jewish Affairs in French; it was established by the Vichy regime in March 1941 and introduced anti-Semitic legislation), also humiliated Blum, emphasising his Jewish identity: "For the first time this old Gallo-Roman country would be governed … by a Jew."[121] They viewed Blum as a Jewish invader as well as a socialist whom they considered to 'ruin' the 'genuine' and 'authentic' France. Paula Hyman underlines that Blum as a prime minister symbolised the

---

[118] Ibid., pp. 63-64.
[119] Schuker, 'Origins of the "Jewish Problem" in the Later Third Republic', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 145.
[120] *L'Action française*, 29 September 1938, quoted in Sherwood, Mandel, p.212, cited in Schuker, 'Origins of the "Jewish Problem" in the Later Third Republic', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 165.
[121] *Journal Officiel,* Débats, Chambre, June 7, 1936, p. 1327, cited in Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 148.

Jewish invasion and subjugation of France to anti-Semites.[122]

Several anti-Semites exaggerated that Jewish high governmental officials, including Blum, would not only take over the nation but also plan to ruin the French people. The PSF (Parti Social Français; French Social Party in French), which was an ultra-nationlist movement led by colonel François de La Rocque, put up placards in Alsace, claiming: "the Jew kills your parents," "steals your goods," and "poisons your race."[123] Moreover, the PSF in Alsace compared Blum to Hitler in 1938. It expressed anti-Semitic feeling thorugh a cartoon. Mimicking famous Nazis propaganda slogans, in the cartoon, Blum appears in a Nazi uniform with Star of David instead of Swastika and Jews shouting: "One Volk! One Reich! One Fuhrer! Heil Blum!"[124] The anti-Semites connected their anti-German feeling to their anti-Semitic hatred on Blum.

Anti-Semitic conservatives connected their fear of revolutions with newly arrived immigrant Jews. Susan Rubin Suleiman argued that the influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe beginning in the early 1880s blasted the hope for harmony between French and Jewish identities.[125] Beyond their visible foreignness, such as Yiddish-speaking and a poor economic situation, immigrant Jews did not seem to politically belong to France from the perspectives of right-wing anti-Semites. Considering revolutions as anti-nationalist and anarchist, anti-Semites kept warning about the perils of mass immigration. In 1915, Charles Fegdal, who was a writer, criticised Jews, especially those who lived in Paris, in his article "Le Ghetto Parisien,": "our good Talmudists are ultra-socialists…, [the Parisian ghetto being] a

[122] Ibid.
[123] Soucy, *French Fascism: The Second Wave 1933-1939*, pp. 157.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'Irène Némirovsky and the "Jewish Question" in Interwar France', Yale French Studies, no. 121, Literature and History: Around "Suite Française" and "Les Bienveillantes" (2012), p. 20.

refuge of more or less militant international revolutionaries."[126] In the 1930s, La Rocque, a leader of anti-Semitic organisation *La Croix de Feu*, denounced foreigners, particularly implying immigrant Jews, as they espoused Marxist ideas.

> France is the sweetest of adoptive mothers… we have to protect our loyal hospitality against the abusive unfurling of foreigners who come to dispossess our manual workers of their jobs and transmit to our citizens the germ of insurrection and revolution….[127]

A mass immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe strengthened the socialist image of Jews. Far more than the native French Jews, many immigrants Jews were seen as adherents of left-wing ideologies. In fact, a large number of recent Jewish immigrants supported Communist or Socialist ideology, and many of them also participated in Communist-affiliated groups.[128] There were many fractions, for example, French SFIO (Section Française de l'Intenationale Ouvrière; French Section of the Workers' International in French; it was a Socialist Party of France), Polish Bund, anarchists, left Zionists, and Communists, such as, Stalinists and Trotskyites. They sharply distinguished themselves from each other, however, whilst the anti-Semitic conservatives simply categorised them as a single ethnic political group and viewed them as the enemy.[129] The conservative anti-Semites exaggerated the connection between Jews and left-wing ideologies, and branded them as threats to France.

Foreign Jews, especially those who originally came from Russia, were suspected by

---

[126] Charles Fegdal, "Le Ghetto parisien contemporain," *La Cité* (Paris), 14 (1915): 230, cited in Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 49.
[127] La Rocque, *Public Service*, cited in Soucy, *French Fascism: The Second Wave 1933-1939*, pp. 153-154.
[128] Schuker, 'Origins of the "Jewish Problem" in the Later Third Republic', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 145.
[129] Ibid., p. 170-171.

extreme right. As discussed above, they were regarded as the Communists who overthrew the Russian empire and tsar and would likely topple the 'true' France ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917. A different type of Jewish refugees who came over France after 1933 brought a different anti-Semitic sentiment. Fleeing from Hitler's Germany, many Jewish refugees were mostly middle-class professionals. In 1933, some 25,000 Jews arrived in France were not necessarily economic refugees like earlier Jewish immigrants. Continuously suffering from economic crises in the 1930s, these middle-class professionals were considered competitors with the French middle-class, such as businessmen, lawyers, and doctors. Many Jewish medical students were sporadically lynched at their universities and institutions.[130] Vicki Caron analysed the middle-class anti-Semitism in her article, *The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered*. She argued that middle-class Frenchmen did not even conceal their hostile feeling towards Jews who had professional jobs. Along with German Jews, many Romanian Jews were also regarded competitors of middle-class professionals.[131]

Aware of the rising anti-Semitic sentiments among the French professionals, a number of right-wing groups actively led the campaign for protecting the middle-class against Jews, especially foreign Jews. Paul Elbel, a president of the Radical faction in the Chamber of Deputies, did not stop to argue that 'undesirable' foreign Jewish merchants had been invading the region of Alsace and Lorraine for years after it was repatriated in 1918, and they had been engaging in 'unfair' competition.[132] Pierre Dominque, a head of the Corsican federation of

[130] Alice L. Conklin, Sarah Fishman and Robert Zaretsky, *France and Its Empire since 1870* (New York, 2011), pp.187-188.
[131] Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s', pp. 43-44.
[132] Ibid., pp. 55.

Charles Maurras's *Action Française*, asserted that a selective immigration policy was necessary. Dominique agreed to immigration for the shortfall of French military recruits; however, he supported only 'desirable' immigrants such as workers or peasants and expressed hostility towards the 'undesirable' or 'hypercivilised' Jews who would be the threat to commercial professionals in France.[133]

Moreover, governmental xenophobic and anti-immigrant legislation empowered anti-Semitic feelings of the middle-class in France. Conservative governments passed legislation that limited immigrants, including naturalised immigrants, to have these jobs for five to ten years after their naturalisations. This was a significant moment that damaged the values of the French Republic. That is, a two-tiered system of citizenship was created regarding professional rights.[134] Due to this legislation, foreign and immigrant Jews (including those who achieved French citizenship) were 'legally' attacked by the government. Moreover, a series of these anti-Semitic legislation and policies accelerated the spread of anti-Semitic sentiment in the late 1930s.

'Unassimilable' Jews

Although the newcomer immigrant Jews were severely criticised by anti-Semites as they were seen 'unassimilable', native French Jews were never free of aspersion. The conservative anti-Semites viewed all Jews as unassimilable and foreign. It was not exactly the same way the Nazis discriminated Jews by blood and race; however, a similar logic existed in

[133] Pierre Dominique, "La France n'est pas un 'tir aux ambassadeurs,'" *La Republique* (November 9, 1938), pp. 1,3., cited in Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s', pp. 56.
[134] Conklin, Fishman and Zaretsky, *France and Its Empire since 1870*, pp. 188.

France based on viewing Jews as unpatriotic or cultural outsiders. Not only denouncing Léon Blum politically, a notorious rumour about his origins appeared in the anti-Semitic narrative. It cast doubts on his nationality and anti-Semites argued that he was not a 'true' Frenchman. For instance, after Zora, a Bulgarian newspaper, launched a rumour that Blum was born at Vidine (a Bulgarian city) on 7 June 1936, this spread rapidly in France. Soon in October 1937, *Nouvelles économiques et financières*, emphasised his origins: "Léon Karfunkelstein known as Blum was born at Vidine, in 1872. He came to Paris with his parents in 1874."[135] Blum himself and sympathetic papers, such as *Le Populaire*, *L'Univers israélite*, or *Tribune juive Strasbourg-Paris* refuted that it was not true whatsoever, and he was really born in Paris whilst his father was born in the Lower Rhine.[136] Nonetheless, anti-Semitic commentators never ceased claiming that his origins were not French and falling back on one of the classic anti-Semitic stereotypes, the 'wandering Jew'. Urbain Gohier, who was an old collaborator of Drumont, demanded that the 'wandering Jew' (implying Blum) be sent back to his Ghetto in Frankfurt, implying that he was originally German, not French. Another famous anti-Semitic commentator, Charles Maurras, stressed that Blum was originally from Germany as his last name showed. He wrote: "M. Blum whose name means flower in German, does not forget that his Yeddish [sic] blood is not without some good Germanic globules."[137] The anti-Semitic paper, *Gringoire*, argued for an oriental origin of all French Jews. Writers of *Gringoire* continually vilified Léon Blum and Jean Zay, who was a Minister of National Education and Fine Arts from 1936 to 1939, as 'oriental invaders'[138]

---

[135] *Les Nouvelles économiques et financières*, 22 October 1937, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 104.
[136] Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France,* pp. 104.
[137] *L'Action Française*, 11 May 1936 and 7 January 1937, cited in *Birnbaum, Anti-Semitism in France,* pp. 104.
[138] *Gringoire*, 5 November 1937, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 105.

Additionally, pseudo-scientific racial theory did not disappear in interwar France. Jean Giraudoux, a moderate right-wing dramatist, reflected his political views through his works, such as *Pleins Pouvoirs*. In this book, he denounced Jews:

> All the expelled, the inapt, the greedy, the ill … the hundreds of thousands of Ashkenazim, escaped from the ghettos of Poland or Romania … accustomed … to work in the worst conditions, [and] who drive our compatriots out of every sector of small-scale artisanry.[139]

Using charged racial terms, he described the contemporary France:

> "Our land has become a land of invasion. The invasion is carried out just as it was in the Roman Empire, not by armies but by a continual infiltration of barbarians," and he described central and eastern Europe barbaric, "the bizarre and avid cohort of central and eastern Europe… primitive or impenetrable races".[140]

Giraudoux, nonetheless, was opposed to the Action française's slogan, "France for the French", and he agreed to accept immigrants (although it must be selective).[141] However, his 'generosity' was not applied to Jewish refugees. Giraudoux applauded Hitler's perspective.[142] In terms reminiscent of Hitler, he emphasised: "that politics has not achieved its highest form unless it is racial."[143] It is important to note that anti-Semitism with its obsession with race

---

[139] Jean Giraudoux, *Pleins pouvoirs* (Paris, 1939) pp. 65-66, cited in Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s', pp. 57.
[140] Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, pp. 53.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s', pp. 57.
[143] Jean Giraudoux, *Pleins pouvoirs* pp. 75-76, cited in Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s', pp. 57.

continued to exist in the right-wing discourse; more importantly, Giraudoux's support to Hitler's view implied that French right-wing commentators were not necessarily anti-German. Rather, some right-wing figures agreed with Hitler's ideas, accelerating Jewish persecution under the Vichy regime during the war.

French Catholics

French Jews were continually attacked by French Catholics as well. Anti-Semitism from French Catholics also existed before the interwar period and flourished during the Dreyfus Affair. *La Bonne Presse*, a Catholic newspaper, claimed in August 1890: "the Jew is the enemy, this is the Christian cry from Golgotha to the present day."[144] Robert Byrnes, a scholar who examined anti-Semitism in France, argued that one of the critical themes shown in Drumont's book, *La France Juive*, was Jewish anticlericalism, depicting Jews as enemies of the Catholic Church.[145] Not all Catholics supported the idea shown in *La France Juive*, and some refuted it. The Archbishop of Paris denied a rumour that he financially subsidised the publication of the book and moreover, he condemned the anti-Semitic outbursts expressed in the book.[146] However, certain groups, for example, the Assumptionist Fathers, were enthusiastic towards Drumont's anti-Semitic ideas. On the same day of the publication, they printed a review of the book written by Father Georges de Pascal in *La Croix*. The other influential Catholic daily newspaper, *L'Univers*, which was edited by Eugène Veuillot, a brother of Louis Veuillot who

[144] Pierre Sorlin, '*La Croix' et les Juifs* (Grasset, Paris, 1967), pp. 79 and 95, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 178.
[145] Robert F. Byrnes, *Anti-Semitism in France, Volume 1: The Prologue to the Dreyfus Affair* (New Brunswick, 1950), pp. 139-140.
[146] Ibid., pp. 181.

was a ferocious anti-Semite, praised the book as 'instructive and courageous' and reprinted the last page of the book that claimed that Christian France must rise from Jewish domination as Christ had also risen after deicide of Jews.[147] *Le Correspondant*, another major Catholic journal, also expressed racist anti-Semitic views and demanded the Jews to accept the book as a warning, describing them with humiliating slurs, such as 'parasites'.[148]

There were French Catholics who refuted anti-Semitism or expressed ambivalent feelings on anti-Semitism later in interwar France. There was a schism among the French Catholics on the issue; for example, there was social Catholicism. Some French Catholics tried to apply Catholic principles to the widespread political and economic problems in society.[149] Social Catholicism was strengthened and expressed in newspapers like *L'Aube*, *Sept*, *Esprit*, *La Juste Parole* and *Temps présent*. They fought against anti-Semitism and racist ideas.[150] Therefore, it is difficult to generalise about Catholic opinion at this time; however, the anti-Semitic voices from the several groups of conservative French Catholics did not cease in the interwar period. *La Croix*, although it never explicitly attacked Blum as a Jew, continued its hostile attitude towards him and the Popular Front movements. Radical anti-Semites, for example, conservative writers like Henri Massis, Henry Bordeaux, and Marcel Jouhandeau, and Xavier Vallat, claimed their politics was shaped by their Catholic faith as members of the *Fédération nationale catholique*.[151] Although it was not the official position of the church leadership, Léon Daudet, who was a right-wing monarchist, connected France and Catholic

147 Ibid., pp. 181-182.
148 Ibid., pp. 182.
149 Parker Thomas Moon, 'The Social Catholic Movement in France under the Third Republic', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 7 no. 1 (1921), pp. 24.
150 Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 179.
151 Ibid., pp. 181.

Church, and continually urged 'Catholic France' to fight against Blum.[152] George Suarez, who later became an editor of the collaborationist press *Aujourd'hui* in the Second World War, once openly expressed his anti-Semitic feeling that Blum would persecute the Catholics.[153]

Anti-Semitism and Immigrant Jews

Immigrant Jews over the entire period of the Third Republic became most vulnerable targets of anti-Semitic conservatives. From the early period of the Third Republic, the anti-Semitic presses additionally exploited this situation to stir anti-Semitic feelings; they exaggerated the total number of immigrants who arrived in 1892, raised from ten thousand to over fifty thousand.[154] Nancy Green, discussing immigrant Jew's daily lives in her book, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pointed out the anti-Semitic press exaggerated the worst of every aspect of foreign Jews. For example, a slur "Dirty Jew" was expressed as "The Jewish infection," Yellow with dirt," "dressed in tatters".[155] Seeing Jews as a threat to the political and biological health of the nation, the most extreme commentators imagined reversing emancipation altogether. For example, the ferocious weekly anti-Semitic newspaper, *Je suis partous*, discussed "Jewish Question" in one entire issue in April 1938. Rabid anti-Semitic commentators, Robert Brasillach and Lucien Rebatet, provided a "solution", calling to strip French Jews of their citizenship and adding: "We demand that Jews be returned to their condition as Jews…

---

[152] *L'Action Française*, 9 March 1926, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 181.
[153] Alice Kaplan, *The collaborators: The Trial & Execution of Robert Brasillach* (Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press: 2000), 80 and L'Ami du peuple, 1 June 1937, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 181.
[154] *La Libre Parole* (Paris), August 5, 1892 and *Le Jour* (Paris), December 18, 1892, cited in Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 49
[155] Ibid.

stripping Jews of French citizenship, and of all the rights that go with it."[156]

Although 'assimilation' was an important value of the anti-Semitic conservatives, assimilating efforts still never met their criteria for success. Not only fully integrated and assimilated native French Jews became the target of anti-Semitism, but also, those foreign Jews who vigorously attempted to assimilate into French society but could not be accepted as a part of French society. For example, Irène Némirovsky could not obtain French citizenship; moreover, she was eventually victimised in the Shoah in the summer of 1942. She was born in Kiev in 1903, moved to France when she was a teenager. She appreciated French culture and continually applied for French citizenship. Némirovsky was a radical assimilationist, as she was later described by a reviewer, after her death, as "the very definition of a self-hating Jew" in 2008.[157] She wrote articles and published them in several nationalist newspapers, such as *Candide* and *Gringoire*, and also converted to Roman Catholic Church in 1939; however, she was never accepted and continued to be viewed as 'foreign Jew' until her death at Auschwitz. That implies that, for extreme right-wing nationalists, the assimilationist effort was not enough to be 'authentic' French.

Philo-Semitism of Right-Wing

Whilst not pervasive as anti-Semitism in French society, especially among the political Right, there were, nonetheless, several conservative philo-Semitic voices. Their values

[156] Brasillach's article, "La question juive," appeared on the front page of *Je suis partout* (15 April 1938), cited in Suleiman, 'Irène Némirovsky and the "Jewish Question" in Interwar France', pp. 15.
[157] Ruth Franklin, "Scandale Française: The Nasty Truth about a Literary Heroine," *The New Republic* (January 30, 2008), cited in Suleiman, 'Irène Némirovsky and the "Jewish Question" in Interwar France', pp. 11.

regarding French politics and society sometimes overlapped with those of the anti-Semites, such as anti-Communism, a pro-religious stance (especially – viz-a-viz the Catholic church) and anti-German sentiment. However, they displayed a positive, but selective, attitude on Jews in France. It is important to note that these right-wing philo-Semites did not always defend French Jews as a group and did not express warm feelings towards every single Jewish individual in France. They were, rather, selectively supportive of French Jews according to their own conservative values; this did not appear by simply dividing Jewish communities in France into the native French Jews against foreign Jews, as had been common among the xenophobic right-wing commentators who scapegoated immigrants Jews from the late nineteenth century to the interwar period.[158] Their philo-Semitic attitudes were more complicated as each philo-Semitic individual revealed their opinions across a wide spectrum of conservative issues.

Their voices sometimes appeared to refute anti-Semitic arguments and their philo-Semitic sentiments existed across different fields of French society, such as French politics and society. Many pro-Jewish voices were presented within the French Catholic press. Although philo-Semitic sentiments did not suddenly appear in the 1930s, progressive and moderate Christians in France were motivated to defend some Jews and their rights against a rapid surge of anti-Semitism. Several Catholic papers, such as *L'Aube, Sept, Temps présent*, *Esprit* and *La Juste Parole*, were against anti-Semitism and racism in French society.[159] Francisque Gay, a French politician who committed himself to Christian democracy, started to publish *La Vie Catholique* in 1924. Subsequently, in 20 January 1932, Gay launched *L'Aube* which was a

[158] Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 149.
[159] Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 179.

social democratic daily newspaper. There were some 7,000 to 11,000 subscribers when it started.[160] Up until the end of the Third French Republic, it gained huge support and it was broadly circulated in France. It printed some 14,000 copies a day in 1939.[161] As *La Vie Catholique* fought against extreme-right wing commentators, such as Charles Maurras of *L'Action Française*, *L'Aube* continued to criticise the extreme right-wing politicians and commentators. In addition, it expanded their critique towards Hitler himself and a policy of appeasement of Hitler.[162] *Sept* was another significant Catholic newspaper. As a weekly periodical of the Dominicans, Marie-Vincent Bernadot, who was a Father of French Dominican Order of Toulouse, started the periodical in February 1934. It also gained popularity in Paris; In 1936 alone, it printed between 50,000 and 60,000 copies.[163] *Temps présent* was a weekly Catholic magazine that replaced *Sept*. Contributors of both *Sept* and its successor, *Temps présent*, attempted to spread a network of friendships and sympathies around the entire nation. They additionally succeeded in creating a conscious Christian spirit.[164] In October 1932, Emmanuel Mounier, a French teacher and essayist, started a literary magazine, *Esprit*, which contained a Non-conformist view that was partly influenced by Social Catholicism. Defending human rights in general, the magazine actively defended Jewish rights too. It had the modest number of copies of 4,000, however, it had a unignorable prestige because of the persons in the editorial board.[165] A considerable number of copies of newspapers were published in the 1930s and they tried to defend their fellow Jewish citizens, although this was subject to real

[160] Pierre Pierard, *Les Laïcs dans l'Église de France: XIXe-XXe siècle (Paris*, 1989), pp. 196.
[161] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 155.
[162] Bernard Comte, 'Françoise Mayeur. L'aube. Étude d'un journal d'opinion (1932-1940)', *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France*, 53 no. 150 (1967), p. 136.
[163] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 155.
[164] Jacques Maritain, 'Religion and Politics of France', *Council on Foreign Relations* 20 no. 2 (1942), p. 273.
[165] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 155.

limitations.

One of the important philo-Semitic figures on the French Right was Oscar de Férenzy who was originally from a Protestant family but converted to Catholicism in 1890. He founded the periodical, *La Juste Parole*, which was one of the philo-Semitic Catholic magazines in interwar France. The periodical was published at Strasbourg first in October 1936 and soon moved to Paris and lasted 1940. It had approximately 6,000 subscribers in 1939.[166] He intended to fight against the anti-Semitic periodical, *La Libre Parole* which Henry Coston and Jacques Plancard d'Assac revived as a 'post'-version of Édouard Drumont's notorious journal.[167] As the editor, de Férenzy aimed to defend Jews of France against vehement criticism made by anti-Semites. Jews were not welcomed from the religious perspective of the Catholic Church as traditional Catholic anti-Semitism continued in modern France. According to Pierre Birnbaum's explanation in his book *Anti-Semitism in France*, Jews were responsible for the death of Christ and seen as 'veritable Satans' to the Catholic Church.[168] Édouard Drumont, known as a founder of anti-Semitic periodical *La Libre Parole*, attacked French Jews connected to the anti-Semitic slur "Christ-Killer". Many priests in France supported and became among the most zealous propagandists of Drumont.[169] Several figures from French Catholic establishment did not always agree with violent anti-Semitism which was supported by far-right, but they acknowledged that non-violent anti-Semitism is absolutely acceptable. For example, Jean Guiraud who was the former executive editor of *La Croix*, a principal organ of Catholic opinion that had close ties to the Vatican, argued that violent anti-

[166] Ibid.
[167] Poujol, 'Oscar de Férenzy ou les limites du philosemitisme dans l'entre-deux-guerres', pp. 14-16.
[168] Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 178.
[169] Ibid.

Semitism is not condoned, but saw nonviolent forms of anti-Jewish discrimination, supported by the medieval Church, as perfectly acceptable. As he explained, "all countries and all societies have the right to defend themselves against the introduction of foreign elements…it was this right she [the Church] used against the Jews."[170]

Many conservative authors defended Jewish rights in French society, although the editor and contributors of *La Juste Parole* restricted their support, usually to those who were considered 'assimilated' or 'integrated' Jews. This magazine is noteworthy for revealing the diversity of opinions among right-wing commentators regarding Jews in France. Many articles from *La Juste Parole* reveal how the philo-Semites applied their conservative criteria and the terms in which they defended Jews; ultimately this indirectly shows there was a limitation of their philo-Semitism.

Assimilation was an important value for philo-Semites as it was to anti-Semitic conservatives. They demonstrated that Jews in France had fulfilled their civic duty in diverse fields. Military service was one of the important careers and the conservative philo-Semites continually emphasised this as one of the important social duties to be considered as 'true' French. Particularly, Jewish participation in the First World War was continually discussed among the philo-Semites. They, unlike their anti-Semitic peers, defended Jews by insisting that they had actively served in the French military for decades, especially in the First World War, and hence demonstrated their citizenship. For example, in the 1938 issue of *La Juste Parole*, the article, "Les Juifs et la défense nationale" ("Jews and National Defence" in French), dealt with French Jewish roles in many wars in which France participated. The article not only

[170] Jean Guiraud, "Position de l'église en face de la xénophobie," *La Croix*, Sept. 27, 1938, pp. 1, 5, cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 282-283.

covered the Jewish participation in the First World War, but also introduced their active participations in the Crimean War and the Napoleonic Wars, providing specific numbers of French Jewish soldiers who sacrificed themselves in these conflicts. The author, who appeared as J.B., argued not only there was an active Jewish participation in the First World War, but also their participation in the French military was a continuous tradition. He provided the precise numbers:

> We can clearly see the tendency to denigrate, disfigure, diminish and annihilate the Jewish sacrifice for the defence of the territory between 1914 and 1918… [Additionally] under Napoleon I, the central consistory recorded there were 797 Jewish career soldiers in 1810. Fifty-two Jews died in the battle of Waterloo. A number of Jews participated in the Crimean campaign.[171]

It is also interesting that the author pointed out Jewish patriotism in French imperial wars and campaigns in North Africa. French imperialism continued to be popular in interwar France, as there were several colonial expositions, such as the 1930 celebrations of the centenary of the conquest of Algeria and 1931 Vincennes colonial exposition in Paris.[172] The French government wanted to glorify its global power through the 1931 colonial exposition.[173] Ethan Katz pointed out that French Jews' enthusiastic and loyal role in the nation's 'civilising' mission in Colonial Algeria was recognised in France.[174] The article, "Les Juifs et la défense nationale" confirms it. The author, J.B., praised French Jews as agents in the French imperial projects by

---

[171] J.B., 'Les Juifs et la défense nationale', *La Juste Parole*, no. 33, 5 May 1938, pp. 9-10, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.
[172] Martin Thomas, *The French empire between the wars: Imperialism, Politics and Society* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 194.
[173] Ibid., pp. 200.
[174] Ethan Katz, 'Between emancipation and persecution: Algerian Jewish memory in the *longue durée* (1930-1970)', *The Journal of North African Studies*, 17, no. 5 (2012), p. 796.

adding, "And we reserve ourselves to speak the military action of the North African Jews who contributed to the conquest of Algeria 1830, as well as the French patriotism of Jews in Tunisia and Morocco."[175] Another article, "Aux Juifs Morts pour la France" ("To Jews [who] died for France" in French) published in July 1938, emphasised again that the French Jews played an appropriate civic role by defending the nation. The author argued: "the Israélites, in their attitude as citizens, whose duty of honour is not only to enjoy civil and political rights, but also to take a responsibility when the nation calls all its sons to defence of borders."[176] Another article from *La Juste Parole* confirmed that the conservative philo-Semites did not defend the French native Jews exclusively. Regarding foreign Jews, the editor and contributors showed a complicated attitude. From the issue of *La Juste Parole* in 1937, there is the article, "Les Juifs Immigrés – L'épopée des engagements volontaires Juifs dans l'armée française" ("Immigrant Jews – The Epic of Voluntary Participation of Jews in the French Army" in French) , that dealt with the foreign Jewish participation in the First World War. Refuting an argument of *La Libre Parole*, the article suggested that there were 15,000 foreign Jews who joined the French military, illustrating that there were a number of tombs of the Polish Jews who fought for France.[177] This shows that the philo-Semites did not distinguish between Jewish communities, rather they displayed their approbation of all the Jews of France who fulfilled their own conservative 'criteria'.

The philo-Semites among the conservatives often displayed a more ambivalent position on foreign Jews as explained above. They showed uncomfortable feelings toward

---

[175] J.B., 'Les Juifs et la défense nationale', *La Juste Parole*, no. 33, 5 May 1938, pp. 10, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.
[176] J.B., 'Aux Juifs Morts pour la France', *La Juste Parole*, no. 37, 5 July 1938, pp. 6-9, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.
[177] J.B., 'Les Juifs Immigrés – L'épopée des engagement volontaires Juifs dans l'armée française', *La Juste Parole*, no. 16, 5 July 1937, pp. 7-11, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.

foreigners and refugees, including immigrant Jews, who they considered 'unassimilable'. That is, they did not defend Jews in general, rather they selectively defended Jews and their rights according to their own conservative criteria. In addition, this demonstrates that there was convergence between the right-wing anti-Semitism and philo-Semitism, which was a limitation of the conservative philo-Semites. Vicki Caron has analysed their thoughts on foreign Jews in her book, Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942. De Férenzy as the editor, showed in the issue published in 1938 his anxiety toward the refugees streaming in from central and eastern Europe, including newcomer Jews, stating that France could no longer take all refugees. He insisted this refusal was not based on a racist idea, nor was it a matter of ethnicity. Rather, assimilation was one of mandatory criteria from the perspective of philo-Semitic conservatives. He wrote: "[They are] alien to our language, our culture, (and) our customs. Moreover, they were likely… to become a crushing burden on our public assistance organisations…".[178] François Mauriac, who joined *La Juste Parole* in April 1937, and vocally defended Jews, also revealed the limitation of philo-Semitism. In one letter, Mauriac indirectly showed an uncomfortable feeling on Jewish ethnic distinctiveness, by writing:

> For a Catholic, anti-Semitism is not only an offence against charity… however, [Jews] they cannot corner international finance without giving people the feeling of being dominated by them. They cannot swarm everywhere into a place where one of them has insinuated himself (the Blum Ministry) … They themselves indulge in reprisals.[179]

[178] Ocsar de Férenzy, "Les Limites du refuge," no. 43 (Nov. 5, 1938): 3-8; Férenzy, "Le Parti Social français et les juifs," Apr. 20, 1939, pp. 3-7; Férenzy, "Comment combattre l'antisémitisme?" no. 59 (July 5, 1939): 2-5., *La Juste Parole*, cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 284.

[179] Letter reprinted in *Bulletin du Centre de documentation et de vigilance*, no. 28 (8 April 1937), and also by *L'Univers israélite*, 23 April 1937, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 182-183.

Beyond the negative description of Jewish ethnic distinctiveness, his accusation on international economic domination of Jews surprisingly overlapped with the anti-Semitic arguments.[180] Stanislas Fumet, an executive editor of *Le Temps present*, who was a more liberal Catholic figure, displayed a similar opinion, noting "[nations had the right] to defend themselves against an excessive percentage of Jews in a country's high level positions."[181] These philo-Semites' opinions reveal that there was a point of convergence between anti-Semites and the limited version of philo-Semitism.

While the philo-Semitic Catholics showed a secular attitude toward Jews regarding civic duties, they defended Judaism according to their own religious interpretations. From *La Juste Parole*, for example, many authors defended Jewish rights and Jewish people, stressing the shared history of Jews and Christians. Certain recurrent topics throughout the magazine reflected its ambitions. First, there were many articles arguing that Christianity and the Catholic Church were in principle opposed to the strand of contemporary anti-Semitism that was popular in France and other European countries. For example, Paul Rémond, who was a French Catholic priest and later became an archbishop of Nice, offered a positive perspective on the relationship between the Catholic Church, Jews and Judaism. Through an article, "*L'Église catholique en face du Judaïsme*" ("The Catholic Church facing Judaism" in French), he emphasised that the Catholic Church did not support anti-Semitic policies that were popular in European and North Africa countries. He took the examples of Italy and Tunisia. He wrote: "We know that an Italian fascist newspaper criticised Judaism recently… [however] the Pope appointed seventy scholars for his Academy of Science and three of them were Jews. Two of

[180] Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 183.
[181] Stanislas Fumet, "L'Antisémitisme," *Le Temps present*, Sept. 9, 1938, cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 283.

these Jewish scholars are not regarded well by the Duce."[182] The author additionally cited an article published in *Tunisie Catholique* which was an archbishopric organ of Tunisia:

> At this moment, *La Libre Parole* is popular among many bourgeois readers in Tunisia… However, the Catholics do not allow themselves to be affected and refuse to lend any support to this hatred…All Catholic doctrine reproves hatred against anyone and is against racial hatred.[183]

In another issue published in 1936, de Férenzy refuted the perspectives of the Catholic anti-Semites and he cited Jean Soulairol's article published in *L'Aube*, which was a Christian Democratic newspaper against *Action Française*, the royalist right-wing movement. Jean Soulairol, who was a journalist, emphasised that anti-Semitism was not Christian at all by bringing in the authority of Jesus Christ. Citing R. P. L. Dumeste, he argued: "Father Dumeste warns us that Christ overthrew the wall of separation and made all enmities disappear inside him, so there are neither Jews nor gentiles… Christ is not anti-Semitic. [And] a Christian must not also be so."[184]

However, it is difficult to simply conclude that the editor and writers of *La Juste Parole* were sympathetic to Judaism itself as a religion. Throughout many articles, writers usually supported the equal rights of Jewish people and their civic rights as French citizens; however, there was a lack of commitment to protecting Judaism as a religion. Moreover, considering that there was a serious threat to the authority of the Catholic Church posed by the totalitarian

---

[182] Paul Rémond, 'L'Église Catholique en face du Judaïsme', *La Juste Parole*, no. 5, 20 Jan 1937, pp. 4, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.
[183] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[184] Jean Soulairol, 'L'antisémitisme n'est pas chrétien', *La Juste Parole*, no. 3, 5 Dec 1936, pp. 17, 26/AS-12 Archives Nationales.

ideologies, such as Communism, Nazism and Fascism in Europe, the Catholic philo-Semites seemed to band together with Judaism as a tactical necessity. Philo-Semitic Catholic contributors seemed to protect the position and authority of Catholic Church as a religion by appealing to a wider Judeo-Christian tradition.

More than merely defending Jews and their religion, the Catholic Church tended to justify their presence in relation to French politics. Domestic politics in France became highly polemical in the 1930s and the rise of extreme ideologies forced French Catholics to reconsider the position of religion in French society. Philo-Semitic conservatives showed strong hatred towards Bolshevism during the interwar period. Opposing a prejudice that linked the Jews to Bolshevism and Communism, they attempted to demonstrate that French Jews were not related to communism whatsoever. Additionally, there was an attempt to deny that the anti-Semitic dimensions of anti-Bolshevism had any French roots, but rather entirely came from German authors.

They defended Jews in France from accusations of complicity with Communism. Authors in *La Juste Parole* strongly emphasised that hostile generalisations must be stopped. They did admit that there were certainly Jewish communists; however, they pointed out communists were far from exclusively Jewish. For example, de Férenzy in an article published in his magazine in 1936, cited M. Albert Bayet who was a French sociologist who taught ethics at the Sorbonne in the interwar period. According to the article, "Bolchevisme et Judaïsme" ("Bolshevism and Judaism" in French), Bayet answered to the question of the existence of Jewish communists, stating, "Of course, but some are conservatives and others are capitalists. I do not know the Rothschilds, but I doubt they would be Bolsheviks."[185] In the following

[185] Oscar de Férenzy, 'Bolchevisme et Judaïsme', *La Juste Parole*, no. 2, 5 Nov 1936, pp. 6, 26/AS-12,

issue, J.B., another major contributor of *La Juste Parole*, clarified that the Russian Jews did not play an important role in the Russian Revolution, mentioning names of major figures in the Committee of St. Petersburg. He additionally emphasised that the only Jewish member of this committee, Aseff was even not a communist, but a secret agent of Tsar spying in the Central Committee of the party.[186] This implies that Jews were not only outside of the Russian Revolution, but also, they were patriotic to their nation, Russia, as Aseff secretly worked in the committees for Tsar. The author did not mention other important people who were of Jewish origin, for example, Leon Trotsky, since these examples would compromise his argument. Additionally, the author seemed to minimise the existence of a Jewish socialist movement in France. He also tried to dismiss the *Bund*, the revolutionary Jewish political party established in 1897 and became popular among Jews in the early 1900s, as it had some five thousand members by 1900. This Bund movement was viewed as non-French – as it was a component of Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party.[187] The author explained, "In the western provinces of Poland, the Jewish-socialist party known as *Bund* was created among the most miserable Jewish proletarians, but the chief of the *Bund*, *Modem*, actually belonged to a well-known Protestant family."[188] D. Cohen, another major contributor of *La Juste Parole*, refuted the anti-Semitic slur that argued that Karl Marx was originally Jewish in 1938. Cohen argued that Marx was baptised when he was six and he thereafter became anti-Semitic.[189] Therefore, he concluded that Karl Marx must not be associated with Jews. The author also stressed that

---

Archives Nationales.

[186] J.B., 'Le rôle des Juifs dans le movement révolutionnaire en Russie', *La Juste Parole*, no. 3, 5 Dec 1936, pp. 13, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.

[187] Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 124-125.

[188] J.B., 'Le rôle des Juifs dans le movement révolutionnaire en Russie', *La Juste Parole*, no. 3, 5 Dec 1936, pp. 13, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.

[189] D. Cohen, 'Les Juifs sont-ils des Bolcheviks?', *La Juste Parole,* no. 32, 25 Apr 1938, pp. 6, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.

there were no Jewish leaders among the communists, as J.B. continually echoed in a series of his articles.

Regarding the Russian Revolution, Jewish patriotism was emphasised beyond French Jewish patriotism. By doing so, several philo-Semitic figures refuted popular anti-Semitic arguments, such as Jewish world conspiracy or Jewish internationalism. This internationalist image of Jews was not something new. It existed since the revolutionary period in France, when it was often linked to fears of Freemasonry. Throughout the nineteenth century, revolutionary Jews were strangely regarded to form a global network to rival capitalist Jews. This was because of long-held stereotypes about the wandering Jew, which was widespread in European culture. This pre-existing stereotype lent credibility to the infamous anti-Semitic text, known as *Protocols of Elders of Zion*, a hoax about a global Jewish conspiracy, first published in Russia in 1903. It was accepted rapidly when published in France, especially due to their old anti-Semitic beliefs.[190] Philo-Semites tried to defend Jews from the hoax about the notorious Jewish conspiracy. These philo-Semitic authors emphasised that Jews in each European country were patriotic to their own nations, so that they did not meddle in any international conspiracy. For example, J.B. argued that most Jews were very patriotic to the Russian empire and fought against the communists and their ideology during the Russian Revolution.[191]

Several conservative philo-Semites additionally wanted to demonstrate that opinion in France was not intrinsically anti-Semitic. Philo-Semitic right-wing writers denied that France created this stereotype, but rather insisted that the idea was originally imported from Germany.

---

[190] Pierre Birnbaum, 'Grégoire, Dreyfus, Drancy, and the Rue Copernic: Jews at the Heart of French History', in Arthur Goldhammer (trans.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past Volume I: Conflicts and Divisions* (New York, 1996), p. 384.

[191] J.B., 'Le rôle des Juifs dans le movement révolutionnaire en Russie', *La Juste Parole*, no. 4, 5 Jan 1937, pp. 12, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.

De Férenzy, for instance, wrote in an article from the issue published in 1936, "We know that the congress of the Nazis at Nuremberg gave extremely violent speeches that they accused the Jews of harbingers of Bolshevism and the [Russian] Revolution."[192] L. Sirman, who was another philo-Semitic writer, also attempted to shift the responsibility to Nazi Germany. He wrote, "A new propaganda appeared, which identifies Jews with Bolsheviks and vice versa. For years, anti-Semitism and particularly Nazism, used macabre litanies: Judeo-Marxism, public enemy No. 1, Bolshevik government, Jewish government, and so on…".[193] In March 1939, Emmanuel Mounier who founded the philo-Semitic Catholic journal *Esprit* gave similar opinion through the article published in *Le Voltigeur*. While refuting the extreme right-wing publication *Je suis partout*, he criticised anti-Semitism in France. He attempted to blame French anti-Semitism on Nazi Germany and additionally he tried to assert that anti-Semitism in France was nothing special in comparison with other social problems. He wrote: "it is the health of the French national organism against an illness which is endemic but today of foreign origins: anti-Semitism… But these problems exist for the same reasons as specifically Alsatian, Bordelais, Catholic, Protestant, worker or peasant problems exist… French anti-Semitism has no content… it is nothing more than aa symptom of the slow Nazification of the bourgeoisie." [194] While defending Jews and French conservatives, Mounier nonetheless displayed his uncomfortable feeling towards 'socialist' Blum's ministry by mentioning, "M. Léon Blum unwisely multiplied in his entourage that sub-set of politicos who are Jewish socialist politicos."[195] This ambivalent attitude reconfirms that phlio-Semitic French Catholics

[192] Oscar de Férenzy, 'Bolchevisme et Judaïsme', *La Juste Parole*, no. 2, 5 Nov 1936, pp. 4, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.
[193] L. Sirman, 'Judaïsme et Bolchevisme', *La Juste Parole*, no. 68, 20 May 1940, pp. 25, 26/AS-12, Archives Nationales.
[194] *Le Voltigeur francais*, 1 March 1939, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 185.
[195] Ibid.

were not favourable to socialists, whom they believed to threaten French conservative and French Catholic values, regardless of defending French Jews.

Overall, it is important to note that there was not a single unified opinion among French right-wing commentators. Although anti-Semitic sentiment gained more power in the 1930s as French society became rapidly polarised, there were philo-Semitic conservatives who defended Jews and their rights. These philo-Semites refuted intensive anti-Semitism, emphasising that French Jews played appropriate civic and military roles and therefore deserved to have equal rights with other French nationals. According to philo-Semitic arguments, French Jews continually and gradually integrated and assimilated into French society through various methods, for example, participating in wars and military campaigns for the nation.

Nevertheless, there was the limitation of philo-Semitism among the French right. On one hand, philo-Semitic conservatives were a minority compared to the anti-Semitic Right. Anti-Semitic feeling was dominant among the right, especially after the election of 1936 and the success of Léon Blum. In the mid-1930s, continuous influx of refugees exacerbated this feeling. Anti-refugee sentiment and anti-Jewish feeling were mixed and became the domain of the far-right movement in French politics. Sir Eric Phipps, the British ambassador in Paris, an observer of French politics, described, "As to M. Blum, members of the Right political parties and of the "monde," disturbed by the successes of the Left at the polls, and by the legislation introduced under successive Front Popular Governments, are apt to centre their political animosities on him personally, and, because he is a Jew, to abuse Jews in general. Such attacks are commonly heard at Paris dinner tables."[196] On the other hand, beyond their minor voices

[196] Phipps, to the Foreign Office, Apr. 13, 1938, PRO FO 371/21634.C3205, pp. 207-10, cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 268.

among the conservatives, their philo-Semitic attitudes were qualified according to their own conservative values. Only French Jews who met philo-Semitic conservatives' criteria were defended; the others who were seen as not 'fulfilling' civic duties were omitted from discussion or sometimes were even criticised by the philo-Semitic conservatives. This demonstrates that philo-Semitic right was not completely accepting toward French Jews. Moreover, regarding religion, it looks suspicious that their philo-Semitic attitude was somewhat strategic. Their narratives on defending Judaism functioned to consolidate the position of religion in French society, mentioning threats posed to all religions by totalitarian and materialist ideologies. Therefore, although there were considerable philo-Semitic voices in interwar France, French Jews were not defended enough to secure their rights and positions from anti-Semitism.

Chapter 3: Perspectives of Left-wing towards Jews: Philo-Semitism and Anti-Semitism

INTRODUCTION

The radical right was not the only political faction attacking Jews throughout the Third French Republic. Some left-wing commentators, particularly those on extreme left, also criticised Jews continually. It is important to note that French Jews still tended to be more often defended by the left, although some philo-Semitic conservatives, such as the social Catholics discussed in the previous chapter, also sided with French Jews. The far (anarchist, communists and radical socialists) left did not see French Jews as a single ethnic group as the extreme right often did; rather, they selected undesirable sub-groups of French Jews and showed strong hostility towards them according to their universalist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialism or sometimes anti-republican principles. One of the features that distinguishes them from the radical right was that there was comparably less anti-Semitic attack based on racial difference. Even though the radical right's anti-Semitism did not always appear the same as the Nazi-version of racial anti-Semitism, they often categorised Jews as a race and considered them problematic for their idea of 'true' France. On the contrary, the extreme left displayed continuous hatred towards 'Jewishness' not as a racial identity but as a set of social and cultural practices. Jews who were 'anti-socialist', such as capitalists, imperialists, or even Zionists (although Zionism was closely connected to socialism), could not avoid rebuke from the left. The Jews' identity was often intertwined with their political, social and economic positions. Left-wing critics also criticised those on their own side ideologically who displayed their

Jewishness too openly.

Left-wing anti-Semitism already existed since the early nineteenth century, as right-wing anti-Semitic sentiments did. Many anti-Semitic images loudly articulated by extreme left in the twentieth century were not something original but rather recycled images had been continually argued in the nineteenth century. Several left-wing newspapers existed throughout the Third French Republic. For example, *L'Anti-Sémitique*, a short-lived socialist newspaper founded in 1883, had a subtitle "Les Juifs voilà l'ennemi" ("The Jews, the enemy" in French) with its own anti-Semitic title riffing on the anticlericalism of Gambetta.[197] *Le Populaire* was another socialist newspaper. It was a main organ of the SFIO, the main socialist party founded in France in 1905. It was circulated more than 100,000 copies between 1936 and 1937 alone.[198] Additionally, contributors to *L'Humanité*, a daily newspaper founded in 1904 by Jean Jaurès (although he was not personally anti-Semitic), a leader of the SFIO, also expressed anti-Semitic sentiments over several decades. As the major organ of the French Communist Party, it featured many of the anti-Semitic voices on the extreme left.

Anti-Semitism of Left-Wing

Economy: Anti-capitalism and Xenophobia

One of the topics continuously emphasised in the leftist anti-Semitic narratives was extreme hatred of the Jewish bourgeoisie. Pierre Birnbaum points out French socialists and communists subscribed to the myth of les gros (bigwigs in French) that implied that a small

[197] Cohen and Wall, 'French Communism and the Jews', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 82.
[198] Marc Martin, *Médias et journalistes de la République* (Paris, 1997), pp. 162.

minority were considered to have all money and influence (the term usually indicated bankers).[199] According to the myth of les gros, the upper class (les gros) of French society continually exploited the 'small' or 'lower' class people such as workers or employees. Containing extreme anti-Semitic sentiments, the myth existed among the radical left as well as the extreme right, fitting in with an opposition to glaring social inequalities. Anti-Semites attacked a group of Jewish bankers with using this myth. With a focus on successful Jewish families in France, in particular the Rothschilds, the far left frequently targeted wealthy Jews as part of their wider anti-capitalist sentiments. Esther Benbassa points out the Rothschilds especially fuelled the anti-Semitic fantasies not only on the radical right but also on the extreme left. The Left was also fascinated by the occult source of Jewish power, compared to the anti-Semitic radical right.[200]

Attacking the Rothschilds, the ultimate 'capitalist' family, the Left-wing writers sometimes even shared a similar vocabulary to that used by the radical right when it came to criticising Jewish banks and financiers. Michael Marrus emphasises that both radical right-wing polemicists and socialist propagandists had a hostile attitude towards big finance. When the *Union Générale*, the Catholic banking house, suddenly crashed in 1882, the anti-Semitic feeling erupted from the left as well as the right. As many Catholic journalists virulently turned on the Jews, Socialist propagandists too stressed that the Jews, led by the Rothschilds, were responsible for the crash of the bank.[201] French Jews again became the anti-Semites' target during the Panama Scandal. In 1893, the socialists, particularly the polemical left, expressed

---

[199] Pierre Birnbaum, "Anti-Semitism and Anticapitalism in Modern France," cited in Cohen and Wall, 'French Communism and the Jews', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 214-216.
[200] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 139.
[201] Michael Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: A study of the French Jewish Community at the time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 125.

their hatred of French Jews openly, associating the scandal with their anti-Semitic delusions of predatory Jewish capitalism.[202] Their anti-capitalist sentiment did not only blame specific families – like the Reinachs – but Jewish wealth in general. During the Dreyfus affair, although it is true that many left-wing commentators and politicians attempted to defend the Jewish captain and unite together against the right, it is important to note that the left bloc was divided. On 20 January 1898, several socialist deputies in Parliament, such as Jean Jaurès, René Viviani, Jules Guèsde, Alexandre Millerand, and Gustave Rouanet, produced the first manifesto discussing the Dreyfus Affair. Instead of defending the Captain Dreyfus, they viewed the Affair as marginal in relation to the bigger capitalist system. Particularly, Jules Guèsde referred the Affair as a 'struggle between two factions of the bourgeoisie'. The Guesdistes, additionally, continued to denounce the Dreyfusard campaign in 1898 as a gang of Jewish capitalists attempting to defend Dreyfus to achieve public support and 'to wash out… all the stain of Israel.'[203] Émile Zola, a well-known Dreyfusard with his open letter, *J'accuse*, offered a rather sinister alternative image of capitalist Jews in one of his novels, *L'Argent*, although it is debatable whether this really reflected Zola's own view or was a part of his constructing characters. Zola wrote in the novel: "Jewry as a whole, that stubborn and cold-blooded conqueror, marching toward the sovereign kingship of the world amid the nations it has bought one by one with its omnipotent gold… that rules the earth."[204]

The anti-capitalist variant of anti-Semitism never ceased across the interwar period. The Rothschilds were continually stamped as one of the greatest enemies of the workers. The

[202] Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, pp. 132-133.
[203] 'Le manifeste', *La Lanterne*, 20 January 1898, cited in Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, pp. 210.
[204] Emile Zola, *L'Argent* (Paris: Livre de Poche), 483. Cited in Pierre Birnbaum, "Anti-Semitism and Anticaptalism in Modern France," cited in Cohen and Wall, 'French Communism and the Jews', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 215.

Left, especially the communists, did not hesitate in expressing the anti-Semitic sentiment in the 1930s. Echoing the scapegoating of Jewish bankers at the time of the *Union Générale* scandal*, L'Humanité* openly snarled at the Rothschilds in an article published on 16 January 1931. The article attributed the fall of the bank in 1882 merely to the competition with Jewish bankers. "The Rothschilds won… The *Union Générale* was declared bankrupt… The *Union Générale* was crushed because of the will of the Rothschilds and the big Jewish bank…"[205] The attack on the Rothschild was not only expressed verbally, but also visually through an anti-Semitic caricature. On 27 July 1935, Édouard de Rothschild was depicted with an 'Jewish nose' in *L'Humanité*.[206]

(Figure 1)

Against Jewish Workers

[205] *L'Humanité*, 16 January 1931, pp. 1-2, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
[206] *L'Humanité*, 27 July 1935, pp. 4, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Leftist anti-Semitism did not only target the big Jewish financiers who were tended to be native French Jews. Anti-Semitism targeted Jewish workers too, as Zeev Sternhell argued that popular anti-Semitism also played a significant role within left-wing especially in labour movements.[207] Jewish workers, many of whom were immigrants, also became victims of leftist anti-Semitism because they were regarded as taking over the jobs of French workers. Interestingly, this was very similar with the radical right's anti-Semitic argument that immigrant labourers had been invading French economy. For example, one article published in 1911 in *La Guerre sociale*, the socialist-revolutionary newspaper, edited by Gustave Hervé who led an extreme leftist faction, posted a French tailor's letter complaining that Jewish tailors made him lose his job and that he was eager to join an anti-Semitic movement in retaliation.[208] Regarding the leftist attack on Jewish workers, Nancy Green points out an ambivalent attitude of French union movements. She stresses that leftist leaders, on one hand, continually emphasised their ideal of the unity of all workers regardless of their sex, race, religion or nationality. On the other hand, in reality, their priority was protecting French workers' interests and, for this purpose, they sometimes denounced unwelcome foreign immigrant labour forces.[209]

In the end of the 1930s, French society and economy were extremely polarised partly due to political instability and continuous economic crises, and in this climate, immigrant Jews were often viewed to be 'invading' French economy. In order to protect French workers and their rights, several left-wing commentators criticised the Jewish immigrants for taking away

---

[207] Sternhell, 'Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 121.
[208] *La Guerre sociale* (Paris), 20-26 December 1911, cited in Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 180.
[209] Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 180.

jobs from French workers. For example, in 1938, Raymond Millet, a journalist, published his book *Trois Millions d'etrangers en France: Les indesirables, les bienvenus* expressed anti-Semitic perspectives towards immigrant Jews.[210] Additionally, Millet expressed his thoughts on recently-arrived Jews whom he viewed as 'invaders'. In the same year when he published the book, he published a series of articles in the newspaper, *Le temps.* Although he emphasised his opposition to anti-Semitism in general, he criticised that Jews had 'invaded' the Belleville district of Paris.[211]

Politics: Anti-Imperialism and Anti-Zionism

Any French Jews who were viewed as anti-Socialist were harshly criticised, whether they were native French Jews or immigrant Jews. The extreme left brutally condemned French Jews whom they considered 'imperialist'. Contrary to that philo-Semitic conservatives who openly praised the 'patriotic' participation of French Jews in North Africa and Maghreb, hailing them as 'true' Frenchmen, the anti-Semitic left's responses were very aggressive towards these colonial actors. Already in the late nineteenth century, some left-wing commentators, such as Jean Jaurès, tended to connect the anti-Semitic image of capitalist exploiters and attitudes of Jews in North Africa.[212] This socialist anti-Semitic perspective continued in the interwar period. They condemned Jewish activities in the North African colonies, and associated Jews with the image of oppressive imperialists. In 1933, an article titled "We support the Arabic

[210] Caron, 'The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s', pp. 56.
[211] Raymond Millet, "Les Enquêtes du Temps*," Le Temps*, 5 May, 22 May, 24 May 1938, cited in Marrus and Paxton, Vichy France and the Jews, pp. 44.
[212] William I. Brustein and Louisa Roberts, *The Socialism of Fools?: Leftist Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York, 2015), pp. 70-71.

workers against expropriators" criticised Jewish colonisers in North African colonies and Middle East, as an author viewed their colonial activities were not only anti-Socialist, but also the expression of 'Jewishness' which was often against the concept of internationalism of the Left. The author defended and supported Arab workers in those regions and castigated imperialist Jews, snarling: "Yesterday in Palestine, an Arab movement against Jewish colonisation and imperialism is growing and strengthening rapidly reaching the Trans-Jordan, the Hejaz, Syria, Yemen and Iraq."[213] The extreme left attacked 'Jewishness' not only in metropolitan France. The anti-Zionist sentiment was often connected to the anti-imperialist feeling discussed above. For example, Zionism that spread in Palestine was castigated in the same article published in *L'Humanité* in 1933. The author continued: "Particularly, Palestine is under the double oppression of British imperialism and Jewish Zionism… The Jewish minority [in Palestine] is a privileged and oppressive minority… These bourgeois Jews especially drive the [Arabic] farmers from their lands." Then the author emphasised the danger in the spread of Zionist ideas among Jewish workers in France, adding: "Moreover, the Jewish workers, as they are immigrants, have been attracted to Zionism. Combined with imperialism, Zionism, in fact, is criminal colonialism."[214] Through this article, the writer did not only describe Zionism as a form of nationalist imperialism, but also they expressed hostility towards British imperialism. As shown above, they sympathised with the Arab movement in the various areas, such as Trans-Jordan, the Hejaz, Syria, Yemen and Iraq. Here, the pro-Arab feeling was a part of their critique against British policy in Mandate Palestine.

Zionism was also seen to threaten the socialist project. Even when the Left welcomed

[213] *L'Humanité*, 2 November 1933, pp. 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
[214] Ibid.

Jews, they showed a negative attitude towards 'Jewishness' which often appeared visibly among the newcomer Jews. The left-wing commentators demonstrated a hostile attitude to Zionism, as they considered it a type of radical Jewish nationalism. Zionists were harshly criticised as they were not viewed genuine 'socialists' from the perspective of the French militants. For example, the PCF (Parti communiste français; French Community Party in French) generally welcomed the arrival Jewish immigrants who usually worked as manual workers and who were, therefore, easily attracted to the socialist or communist ideals. French Communists were eager to form front organisations so that they could make inroads to Jews and their Zionist movement; several Jewish communist organisations were created. However, they were dissolved by the PCF when leading members of these organisations were equally divided between their communist loyalties and Jewish identity.[215] David Weinberg argues that the primary attitude of the PCF towards Jewish identity was not always friendly. Although the PCF created the Jewish subsection in the party so that they could deliver party's messages to newcomer immigrants who did not understand French, but only spoke Yiddish, leaders of the PCF did not want the Jewish Popular Front to grow. Above all, the PCF did not want to raise "Jewish" issues apart from general problems affecting the entirety of French workers. Leaders of the PCF considered this phenomenon as a deviation of the Jewish subgroup from its collectivist ideal and proper role for the party.[216] Bundists parroted the aggressive attitude of the PCF towards Jews in their newspaper, *Unzer Stime* (Our Voice in Yiddish) in 1937: "Children, it is time for you to become civilised men; you must be equal, you must

[215] Cohen and Wall, 'French Communism and the Jews', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 86.
[216] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 134.

assimilate."[217]

Anti-Semitism towards Left-Wing Jews

It is interesting that left-wing French Jews could not completely avoid anti-Semitism from the hard left. On one hand, several left-wing Jewish politicians were severely attacked by the radical right because of their socialist principles or alleged ethnic traits (based on pseudo-scientific anti-Semitism). On the other hand, these individuals often became victims of left-wing anti-Semitism as well. This happened when the extreme left regarded these Jews as falling short of the socialist image according to their own political 'criteria'. Over decades, Léon Blum was blamed for his bourgeois image. For example, Florimond Bonte, who worked as a secretary of the PCF of northern France, denounced Blum as: "the little darling of the bourgeoisie… the reptile [which] raises its angry head, and spites its venom."[218] *L'Humanité* repeatedly displayed anti-Semitic vitriol towards Blum, using descriptions such as "Shylock-Blum".[219] As early as 1925, leftists castigated him as a "multi-millionaire", "sensualist", "dancer" arousing "the admiration of the highest bourgeois politicians.[220] Pierre Birnbaum points out *L'Humanité* often did not hesitate to employ vocabulary or expressions used in radical right-wing newspapers, such as *Gringoire* or *L'Action Française*.[221] On 14 April 1928, the newspaper boasted of the contrast it offered to: "M. L*é*on Blum, drawing-room socialist, business lawyer and valiant defender of the bourgeois Republic, supported by the Minister of

[217] *Unzer Stime*, May 1937, cited in Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 146 n.136.
[218] Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 209.
[219] Ibid.
[220] *L'Humanité*, 11 and 12 February, 26 July 1925; 7 February 1928; 26 July 1933, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France,* pp. 209.
[221] Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 209.

the Interior. It is like a picture of the fundamental contrast which exists between our party, robust, bold, combative, riddled with blows from the enemy, and old social democracy, degenerate, elegant and sceptical, constantly flirting with the regime which overwhelms it with sinecures."[222] Pierre Semard, a secretary general of federation of railway-workers and one of the leaders of the French Community Party, also equated Blum with an luxurious image and described him, "the refined Blum, corrupted by gold".[223] André Marty, a leading figure of the French Communist Party, once denounced Blum, accusing him for being aided by financiers: "You, Blum, an intimate friend of the biggest cosmopolitan financiers, men who have won decorations for their plunder and theft – like Oustric (an entrepreneur and banker), your friend."[224]

Not only Blum himself, the radical socialists accused the Popular Front as well based on the myth of les gros. In blaming Blum's Popular Front, they mobilised the older anti-capitalist feeling again. They viewed the Popular Front movement as an obstacle to the socialist experience and reproached the movement with expressions such as "wall of money," the "cosmopolitan bourgeoisie," the "money lords."[225] The leftists stressed that there were "too many" Jews in the socialist party. Armand Chouffet, who was a socialist deputy of the SFIO, harshly criticised on the eve of the Second World War: "I've had enough of the Jewish dictatorship of the party… Socialism is not a ghetto. I for one am not going to march for a Jewish war."[226] Another article confirmed their bitter feeling towards socialist Jews who were

---

[222] *L'Humanité*, 14 April 1928, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 209.
[223] *L'Humanité*, 11 May 1928, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 221.
[224] Quoted in Annie Kriegel, *Le Pain et les roses* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 237-38, cited in Pierre Birnbaum, "Anti-Semitism and Anticapitalism in Modern France," in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 217.
[225] Birnbaum, "Anti-Semitism and Anticapitalism in Modern France," in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 221-222.
[226] These statements are cited in Jacques Debû-Bridel, *L'Agonie de la III^e^ République, 1929-1939* (Paris: Le

seen to control the left. Théo Bretin, a socialist politician, exaggerated this in *La Lumière*: "there are only Jews around Blum now, the Blumels, Grumbachs, Blochs, Mochs."[227] Articles written by other authors reconfirmed this. In 1932, Émile Buré, a socialist journalist, exclaimed in *L'Ordre*: "the sons of grandsons of peasants and artisans are no longer concealing their hostility to the nomad of the [*Front*] *Populaire*."[228] As the anti-Semitic feeling rose inside the SFIO, its members tended to attribute crises to Blum even though he endeavoured to prevent the war. In addition, they often regarded that Blum and French Jewish politicians were not working for France, but trying to help their coreligionists in other countries. That is, there was also the anti-Semitic rumbling on "Jewish Conspiracy" inside the SFIO, as the anti-Semitic French Right often believed. An article from *Le Pays normand*, an organ of the SFIO in Calvados, blamed Blum and Jews in general as well: "If war breaks out, it will be your responsibility… the people of France do not follow you. They do not want to have millions of men killed; a civilisation destroyed in order to make life easier for the 100,000 Jews in the Sudetenland."[229] Georges Mandel, a left-wing Jewish politician, was also not free from left-wing anti-Semitic attacks even though he was considered a fully assimilated French Jew and, additionally, served in several positions during several leftist governments (for example, he served as Minister of Posts and High Commissioner for Alsace and Lorraine during the Albert Sarraut government, and later, as Minister of Colonies and Minister of the Interior during the Paul Reynaud government).[230] Nevertheless, Mandel could not avoid an anti-Semitic attack

---

Bateau ivre, 1948), pp. 422, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 214.

[227] *La Lumière*, 9 June 1939, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 204.

[228] *L'Action française*, 26 Oct. 1932, stated that there were already striking manifestations of it in certain writings by Longuet in 1920. See *L'Action française*, 9 Oct. 1920, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, pp. 215.

[229] Quoted by Bilis, *Socialites et pacifistes*, p. 332, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France,* pp. 214.

[230] Geoffrey Warner, *Pierre Laval and the Eclipse of France* (London, 1968), pp. 159.

that blamed his Jewish identity. When Mandel and Édouard Herriot emphasised a military alliance with the USSR in November 1936, several socialists criticised him, relating his Jewish identity with an image of warmonger. Fernand Bouisson, an independent socialist who served as a president of the Chamber and prime minister, argued: "Those men are leading us straight to war … Mandel because he is ambitious and because he is a Jew. Like all the Jews, he is pursuing Hitler with his hatred."[231] Although the Popular Front was temporarily defended by left-wing commentators under the pledge of unity within the left in the mid-1930s, radicals soon restarted the attack against Blum and the Popular Front as diplomatic stability collapsed. On the eve of the Second World War, *L'Humanité* published in *L'Enchaîné du Nort et du Pas-de-Calais*, a provincial communist newspaper, linked Blum to the bourgeois and cosmopolitan image and wrote the formula: "Don't say: citizen Blum. Say: City-man Blum."[232]

The far left's anti-Semitism towards even left-wing Jews was also similar with the radical right. Like the radical right, they recalled the stereotype of 'wandering Jew'. *L'Ére nouvelle*, a socialist newspaper founded by Yvon Delbos and Gaston Vidal in 1919, juxtaposed the French radicals attached to their land and Blum, depicted as a rootless cosmopolitan.[233] When the extreme left attacked Georges Mandel, it was almost identical to the way in which the radical right described French Jews with stereotypical racial description. When Mandel stopped the strike by the postal workers in Dijon who protested for their working conditions, *L'Humanité* criticised him openly by describing him with a "Jewish nose" as they did it when attacking the Rothschild family.[234]

---

[231] Jean Desgranges. *Journal d'un prêtre député, 1936-1940* (Paris, 1960), p. 72, cited in John M. Sherwood, *George Mandel and the Third Republic* (Stanford, 1970), pp. 203-204.
[232] *L'Humanité*, 5 February 1940, cited in Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France,* pp. 210.
[233] Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France,* pp. 217.
[234] *L'Humanité*, 15 January 1935, pp. 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

(Figure 2)

Anti-Semitism and Jewish Identity

The left-wing attitude towards the immigrant Jews was not always positive. In particular, the immigrant Jewish community continually faced a challenge over their signs of 'Jewishness'. Not only Zionists or Jewish socialists, but also other immigrant Jews were criticised by the left simply because they were Jews. While the radical right saw the visible Jewish difference of immigrant Jews as one of the 'unassimilable' factors which prevented them from becoming 'qualified' French citizens, the far left considered religious and ethnic difference as incompatible with the universalist conception of citizenship. Paula Hyman argued that the leftist liberals showed a critical position towards ethnic separatism although they tended to sympathise with their hardships. She provides examples of opinions from *L'Humanité* and the League of the Rights of Man. Both argued that four public schools in Paris, located in a district where many immigrant populations resided, had a student body that contained too many immigrants. A religion-friendly attitude among these schools was criticised

in the press. For example, there were no classes on Saturdays, unlike in other French public schools, and Jewish women sometimes offered free kosher foods for students. On 3 February 1907, *L'Humanité* harshly castigated these religious differences:

> Separated from their neighbourhood pals, these children retain their customs and their language; they form a closed caste and later … in the large Parisian city they will form a very distinct society scarcely penetrable by the customs of modern life … How can we be surprised at racial hatred when … the administration itself favours the particularist development of these races instead of seeking to facilitate their fusion, even from childhood.[235]

In the same year, the League of the Rights of Men blamed the Minister of Public Instruction for allowing public toleration of the schools, as it regarded the concessions as a violation of the religious neutrality of the French state.[236]

CONCLUSION

The anti-Semitic narrative of the extreme left indicates important points. First, the native French Jews and immigrant Jews were criticised for different reasons in leftist anti-Semitic narratives. The native French Jews were often stamped as 'imperialist' or 'capitalist' and immigrant Jews were scapegoated to take over French workers' jobs. However, at the same time, the extreme left did not necessarily distinguish between these two distinct Jewish

[235] *L'Humanité, 3 February 1907*, c*ited in Hyman, The Jews of Modern France,* pp. 121.
[236] Letter of Minister of Public Instruction to the Directory of Primary Education of the Seine, 29 November 1907, Association Consistoriale Israélite de Paris (ACIP), B 80 (1907); letter of the Minister of Public Instruction to the president of the League of the Rights of Man, 17 February 1908, ACIP B 82 (1908), cited in Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France,* pp. 121.

communities concerning their Jewish identity. Their anti-Semitic attitude towards "Jewishness" existed -for native and foreign Jews. Jewish identity was refused and attacked in diverse ways, in text and image. They utilised notorious stereotypes of Jews, such as the 'wandering Jew' and racial stereotypes, for example the "Jewish nose", already familiar in the conservative press. Secondly, socialists and communists who were often against the 'bourgeois' Republic and republicanism did not hesitate to attack fellow socialist Jews when they believed that it was needed. Blum and other Jewish ministers were continually attacked from both sides, the radical right and extreme left. This made them more vulnerable in interwar France. Lastly, the different contents of anti-Semitic polemics tended to overlap. Anti-Zionism was easily connected to anti-imperialism or xenophobia. David Weinberg stresses that the deepened rift between Jews and the French left-wing continued even after the fall of the Third French Republic. On the eve of the Second World War, continuous tensions existed between the French Communists and Jewish Communists. As soon as the war broke out, Jewish Communists joined resistance movements after France was defeated, and the PCF remained strict neutrality towards Jewish suffers up until they initiated resistance movements when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union.[237]

Philo-Semitism of Left-Wing

Philo-Semitic sentiments existed among the left-wing commentators throughout the Third French Republic. It is true that some French Jews, particularly those who were considered capitalists, imperialists or Zionists by the extreme left, were easily targeted.

[237] Weinberg, *A Community on Trial*, pp. 204-205.

Nonetheless, socialists more consistently defended Jewish people and their rights in the Republic, compared to the right, whose general attitudes on Jews continued to be hostile from the beginning of the Third Republic to the end. The leftists' philo-Semitism actively began to appear during the Dreyfus Affair, when France was deeply divided both politically and culturally. Many left-wing intellectuals believed in the innocence of Captain Dreyfus, most notably Jean Jaurès, who reminded fellow socialists that his cause was that of universal truth and justice. From the end of the First World War to the eve of the Second World War, Jews and their communities in France were regularly defended by French leftists, although, as we have seen, there were several left-wing political factions (especially, the French Communist Party that usually followed the direction of the USSR) that did not always uphold philo-Semitic perspectives.

There were several reasons why leftists tended to side with Jews. First, there was a strong humanitarian tradition underpinning, leftist ideals, such as republicanism, socialism and communism. Next, however, there was an intense political motivation among them; defending Jews sometimes became a way of defining leftist values against the right. Lastly, Jewish workers, viewed as proletariats, were celebrated by some philo-Semitic socialists, even though defending Jewish workers, many of whom were immigrants, was not always maintained due to the protectionist mood of French workers.

Leading intellectuals demonstrated their philo-Semitic attitudes through various left-wing newspapers, such as *L'Œuvre*, *Le Populaire*, and *L'Humanité*. Founded in 1904, *L'Œuvre* was a major newspaper of radical left-wing intellectuals and academics, some 275,000 copies were sold in 1936.[238] *Le Populaire* and *L'Humanité* were respectively the organ of the SFIO

[238] Claude Bellanger, *et al*. (eds) (1972), *Histoire Générale de la presse* française (Paris: La Documentation

and the PCF. However, these left-wing newspapers were not always philo-Semitic and included a spectrum of different perspectives that ranged from anti-Semitic to philo-Semitic. As they were selectively anti-Semitic throughout the Third French Republic, they were also philo-Semitic based on their party policies or ideological criteria. For example, *L'Humanité* definitely displayed their anti-Semitic feelings without any hesitation over countless issues; however, it also published many articles that defended Jews according to socialist or communist ideals. In other words, it displayed ambivalent views towards Jews, for example, generally attacking Jewish bourgeoise and defending Jewish workers or proletariats.

This chapter will discuss the philo-Semitic sentiments of left-wing commentators in journals and newspapers circulated during the Third Republic. First, it will analyse left-wing philo-Semitism in the founding decades of the Republic in order to show reasons and aspects of leftists actively started defending Jews. Second, it will explore philo-Semitism in interwar France, mapping left-wing views about the profile of various Jewish communities in the Republic.

Before the First World War

Humanitarian Value

The Dreyfus Affair was a turning point for several left-wing figures to side with philo-Semitism, even though some temporarily and sporadically displayed their hostility towards their Jewish neighbours, especially hatred towards 'big Jewish financiers' and 'Jewish

française), 516-518 and 564-567, cited in Jean K. Chalaby, 'Twenty Years of Contrast: The French and British Press during the Interwar Period', *European Journal of Sociology*, 37 no. 1 (1996), p. 152.

capitalists'. Their philo-Semitism was not particularly shaped along an ideological divide, at least at the outset, and splits were based as much on strong emotions, or a humanitarian ambition, as on principle. The right-wing anti-Semites, particularly on the radical right, harshly attacked not only Captain Dreyfus himself, but also French Jews in general, as they attributed many political and social problems to French Jews. On contrary, many left-wing intellectuals, politicians and writers defended the rights of the Jewish captain as equal to those of all French citizens. One of their primary causes was to protect Jews, including Captain Dreyfus (despite being a member of the 'evil' bourgeois class), based on a humanitarian socialist ideal. Zola spelled out this appeal to universal justice in his famous pamphlet, '*J'accuse*', and many socialists actively sided with Dreyfus according to egalitarian socialist ideals. For example, Charles Péguy and his fellow idealists argued: "Since several parliamentarians calling themselves socialists refuse to follow the right path, we, the young socialists, wish to rescue the socialist ideal from them. Socialists, if they are not to fall into a decline, must go for every form of justice which can be achieved."[239]

In philo-Semitic narratives, Dreyfus was considered a suffering individual rather than a member of the bourgeoisie. This allowed socialists to support him as a martyr, regardless of class politics. Jean Jaurès initially hesitated to side with Dreyfusards, seeing the affair as a distraction, yet he soon supported Dreyfus when he acknowledged the miscarriage of justice and developed an ethical justification to act. He argued: "Dreyfus is no longer an officer nor a bourgeois: He is nothing more than humanity itself."[240] Jauressian philo-Semitism, which

[239] Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society and Politics*, pp. 98.
[240] Jean Jaurès, *Les Preuves* (Paris, 1898), p. 12. Cf. id., Histoire Socialiste XII (Paris, 1900) p. 267, cited in Nancy Green, 'Socialist Anti-Semitism, Defense of a Bourgeois Jew and Discovery of the Jewish Proletariat: Changing Attitudes of French Socialists before 1914', *International Review of Social History*, 30 no. 3 (1985), p. 389-390.

avoided thinking about Dreyfus' Jewishness, became one of the dominant views in the Affair. It was an attempt to defend the Republic and its core values, irrespective of Dreyfus' social background or position in the military, an institution that many the leftists regarded with suspicion.[241] They joined the critique and wanted to expose corruption within the armed services, and the cover-up.

Socialists attempted to counterattack wide-spread anti-Semitic stereotypes, such as racial and economic anti-Semitism, that were continually brought up concerning the 'Jewish Question' in France. Many socialists ridiculed the pseudo-science that was utilised to attack Jews and differentiate them from non-Jewish French. For example, Céléstin Bouglé, a socialist and philosopher, emphasised that there was no 'scientific' evidence behind racial anti-Semitism and, moreover, there was no such thing as racial purity, throughout his article published in *La Revue Socialiste* in 1899, "La Banqueroute de la philosophie des races ("Bankruptcy of the philosophy of races" in French)." He continued to point out that the French nation was a 'mélange (mixture in French)' of many different groups of peoples. Therefore, 'Jewishness' was not something racial, rather he wrote that the Jews kept their own community longer compared to others, arguing that it was culturally and historically different.[242] Gustave Rouanet, a journalist and politician, and Emmanuel Chauvière, a socialist deputy, also rebutted the Drumont's argument that French Jews had too much "predominance" and "influence" in France. Rouanet and Chauvière argued, by contrast, that the blanket equation of Jews with capitalists was misleading, mentioning, since "venality is everywhere."[243]

---

[241] Green, 'Socialist Anti-Semitism, Defense of a Bourgeois Jew and Discovery of the Jewish Proletariat', pp. 389.

[242] Céléstin Bouglé, "La Banqueroute de la philosophie des races", in: RS, XXIX, pp. 385-94, cited in Green, 'Socialist Anti-Semitism, Defense of a Bourgeois Jew and Discovery of the Jewish Proletariat', pp. 391.

[243] Green, 'Socialist Anti-Semitism, Defense of a Bourgeois Jew and Discovery of the Jewish Proletariat', pp.

The Left against the Anti-Semitism of the Radical Right

French socialists clearly recognised that anti-Semitism played an important role as one of the major slogans of the radical right since the late nineteenth century. At the same time, left-wing anti-Semitism tended to recede in the early twentieth century, compared to the active and virulent anti-Semitic perspectives which existed before the Dreyfus Affair.[244] The humanitarian feeling towards Dreyfus was not the only cause of this change in outlook. It is important to note that some left-wing figures sided with other Dreyfusards for more opportunistic, political reasons. For example, some French socialists considered the Dreyfus Affair as a conflict between two factions of the establishment. So, these French socialists showed indifference or sometimes open contempt towards the sufferings of Dreyfus. Like other leftists, Jaurès hesitated to decide his side at the beginning of the Affair. From Jaurès' perspective, Dreyfus was a member of the upper-middle class like Auguste Scheurer-Kestner, a politician from an established French Jewish family.[245] However, Jaurès, a major Dreyfusard later, changed his attitude when he began to consider Dreyfus as a persecuted "proletarian" as Jaurès viewed Dreyfus' sufferings similar to the oppressed.[246] Republican newspapers were also politically motivated in the Dreyfus Affair. Rather than concentrating on defending Dreyfus and French Jews, they harshly condemned the right's anti-Semitic slogans. The Republican presses criticised right-wing anti-Semitism in accord with their anticlericalism and belief in laicité or religious neutrality. Additionally, they did so because they wanted to preserve

393.

[244] Cohen and Wall, 'French Communism and the Jews', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 82-83.

[245] Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society and Politics*, pp. 50.

[246] Cohen and Wall, 'French Communism and the Jews', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 83.

civil peace and public order.[247] Eric Cahm points out that many socialists and workers did not support Dreyfus at the beginning. Instead, they kept silent on the Dreyfus Affair for a long time and refused to take either side on the Dreyfus question in 1898.[248]

Left-wing views on Jews between the 1880s and 1930s diverged into two camps, philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism. However, one common strategy across both camps was that they carefully selected certain groups of Jews to stand in for the whole community, choosing to champion or verify particular characters as a proxy for the whole Jewish community. Therefore, it is not easy to conclude their philo-Semitic attitude completely came from humanitarian principles. Rather, it was easily modified over time by leftist criteria, which ranged from anti-anti-Semitism against the radical right to anti-capitalist sentiment towards 'rich Jews'.

Discovery of Jewish Proletariat

The multiplication of Jewish workers, driven by the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews, resulted in an upsurge of philo-Semitism in leftist discourse in the early Third Republic. As many newcomer Jewish immigrants were poor and economically exploited in workplaces, socialists embraced them as Jewish proletariats. This discovery broke the leftist equation between anti-capitalism and anti-Semitism. That is, according to Nancy Green as well as other historians, the correlation between attacks on Jews and attacks on the capitalist class across the nineteenth century was driven by perceptions of the wealthy Jewish bourgeoisie.[249] This discovery not only turned some socialists philo-Semitic, although criticism continued to

[247] Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society and Politics*, pp. 18.
[248] Ibid., pp. 96.
[249] Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 179.

be aimed at Jewish financiers, such as the Rothschilds but it also provoked socialists to counterattack right-wing's anti-Semitism. Jaurès, who sided with Dreyfusards, began condemning anti-Semitism and emphasised the oppressive conditions of Jewish workers in Algeria.[250] Left-wing sympathy for the Jewish proletariat was not limited to the Republic and its colonies. The socialist periodical, *La Revue socialiste*, also added to their support for impoverished Jewish communities in other places in Europe, such as Romania, which contained one of the most persecuted groups in all Europe.[251] In the early twentieth century, anti-Semitism was severely criticised by left-wing activists as long as it was concerned with Jewish workers and overlapped with socialist ideals. For example, when in April 1911 Emile Pataud, secretary of the electric workers' union, used the word 'Jew' (with which he indicated the Rothschilds) to denote an enemy of workers, he was harshly criticised by several left-wing papers, such as *L'Humanité* and *La Guerre sociale*. This anti-anti-Semitism sentiment was extremely strong among leftists, as anti-Semitism was regarded as a political vice. At a protest against Pataud on 6 April the same year, *Jean Longuet*, a French socialist, started a speech with "The French Socialist Party is with you, Jewish Workers!"[252]

Conclusion: Left-Wing Philo-Semitism before the First World War

These phenomena imply the limitation of philo-Semitism among the left-wing activities. It is, of course, true they were eager to protect Jewish rights and fight against anti-Semitism in the early Third Republic; however, their motivation was multi-faceted. There were

[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid.
[252] *Forverts* (New York), May 5 1911; see also *Archives israélite* (Paris), April 20, 1911, and Szajkowski, pp. 37-44, for the most extensive account of this affair, cited in Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 179-180.

philo-Semites who attempted to defend French Jews based on humanitarian motivations; other philo-Semites, by contrast, were motivated to press their political advantage against the right. It is important to recognise that this latter group of left-wing philo-Semites was not indifferent to Jewish sufferings. Indeed, they protected French Jews from extreme right-wing anti-Semitism. However, their objectives were strongly tied to their political orientations; Eric Cahm argues that, in general, socialists and anarchists had a political reason to support Dreyfus and fight against anti-Semitism in 1898. He emphasises: "The innocence or otherwise of Dreyfus was not their main concern."[253] This tendency did not exist only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it appeared in the interwar period too. In particular, as French society and politics became extremely polarised in the 1930s, this opportunistic motivation behind left-wing philo-Semitism appeared more frequently.

Left-Wing Philo-Semitism in Late Third Republic (after the First World War)

Not all left-wing figures were philo-Semitic and left-wing philo-Semites did not always maintain their friendly attitude towards Jews. Nevertheless, left-wing philo-Semitism continued as a political tradition in interwar France. The reasons for philo-Semitism continued after the First World War. Philo-Semitism of the left promoted humanitarian values, and their philo-Semitism was largely influenced by the rivalry between the left and right; especially, French politics became extremely polarised from the 1930s. Lastly, the continuous influx of immigrant Jews from the East developed the Jewish proletarian community during the interwar period, which justified philo-Semitism of the left and mitigated their 'traditional' anti-Semitism.

[253] Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society and Politics*, pp. 98.

Humanitarian and Internationalism

Philo-Semitic sentiments among the left continued to exist during the interwar period. An emphasis on the moral value of humanity is continually found in written sources. With an internationalist mood prevalent in the left-wing circles, many commentators denounced the wave of anti-Semitism that spread out across Europe. In 1932, *L'Œuvre* complained that anti-Semitic fascists were attacking the sacred value of humanity.

> The 4,000 citizens gathered at the call of the LICA (*Ligue Internationale contre I'Antisemitisme*; International League against Anti-Semitism in French) and accused, in front of the whole of France, that the Hitlerites in all countries systemically formed a 'Holy Alliance of Anti-Semitism and Fascism' and aimed at Jewish minorities and set its goal towards the annihilation of the innocent people… They appeal, across the borders, to all those who want peace, so they unite and organise themselves for the disarmament of hatred and the salvation of humanity.[254]

The following year, *L'Œuvre* again raised its voice for humanitarian values following the suicide of a 13-year-old refugee girl, Sonia Rosenzweig, after her brother was insulted by a French merchant and she was threatened with imprisonment when she protested to police. Some complaiend that the perspective of *L'Œuvre* on Jews was too philo-Semitic, *L'Œuvre* refuted this suggestion: "Neither pro-Semite nor anti-Semite. It's humane, and that's all. If being humane is no longer to be French… we too might just as well stage a public bonfire where the works of all our great writers will be burned."[255] Few years later, in 1935, when a

[254] *L'Œuvre, 3 March 1932,* pp. *7*, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
[255] "Après le suicide de Sonia Rosenzweig," L'Oeuvre, Nov. 2, 1933, p. 4 and "Le Suicide de la petite Sonia

Russian Jewish student was beaten and lynched, *L'Œuvre* and *L'Ère nouvelle*, both radical socialist newspapers, condemned anti-Semitism and warned of the risk of pogrom-like persecution in France. Each paper mentioned this threat; *L'Œuvre* wrote: "[a] pogrom-like atmosphere", and *L'Ère nouvelle* aroused attention at small acts of violence, "doctors and [medical] students of Jewish origin have been cruelly beaten and molested."[256]

Le Populaire displayed a similar sentiment towards Eastern European Jews in 1939 when two Central European Jews were denied residence permits and attempted suicide. An article, "Réfugié en France: Un Industriel de Prague se jette sous une rame de métro" ("Refugee in France: An Industrialist from Prague throws himself under a metro" in French), noted, "Sad, very sad, is the situation of these refugees who ask only to live honestly under a more clement sky than that which exists in their country. Do we have the right to refuse them?"[257] Several socialist figures also kept their anti-Semitism in check. In the 1930s, the influx of refugees, especially new Jewish immigrants, also became a target of the French workers and unions. Against this phenomenon, some socialists emphasised the need for internationalist solidarity and encouraged welcoming them. Emile Farinet, a socialist member of SFIO, encouraged French workers to show generosity and warned against the rising anti-refugee and anti-Semitic mood in *Le Populaire*, arguing, "… we internationalists are shirking our duty to extend mutual assistance."[258]

Rozensweig," L'Oeuvre, Oct. 13, 1933, p. 2., cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 82.

[256] Claude Martial, "Les étudiants en droit vont-ils s'en mêler?," L'Oeuvre , Apr. 4, 1935, p. 2; "L'Agitation antisémite au Quartier Latin," L'Ere nouvelle , Apr. 3, 1935, clipped in APP BA 1812 79-501-882-D, cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 31.

[257] *"Réfugié en France: Un Industriel de Prague se jette sous une rame de metro," Le Populaire, 13 May 1939, pp.1, 2*, c*ited in* Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 212-213.

[258] *Le Populaire*, 3 August 1933, cited in Thalmann, "L'Emigration du *III*e Reich," p. 134; Thalmann, "L'Immigration allemande," p. 158, cited in Caron, *Uneasy Asylum*, pp. 86.

It is true that the Zionist idea was continually attacked by the radical left-wing polemics, as they connected Zionism to either the imperial exploitation of Palestine, or the Jewish nationalist idea that endangered the republican and universalist tradition. Nonetheless, the left-wing's cosmopolitan culture temporarily stopped hostility towards Zionism in the 1920s.[259] A number of left-wing figures displayed support for Zionism. Along with prominent left-wing Jews, such as Léonce Bernheim, Fernand Corcos, and *L*éon Blum, non-Jewish figures, such as Paul Painlevé, Albert Thomas, Justin Godart, and Anatole de Monzie, supported Zionism partly due to a wider humanitarian project in the 1920s.[260] Christophe Prochasson points out that attitudes of the left-wing must be distinguished between the time of Dreyfus Affair and interwar period. He argues that the left, as Dreyfusards, attempted to defend French Republican values in the late nineteenth century; after the First World War, they changed their stance to more internationalist commitments.[261] According to the internationalist movement, left-wing philo-Semites not only stood up for French Jews, moreover, they expanded philo-Semitism to defend the rights of the Jewish minority in Europe and beyond. The alliances of the Great War and the creation of the Soviet Union accelerated the internationalist spirit in French thought.[262] Another example can be found in an article by Justin Godart, a left-wing French politician, who stressed in Palestine, "Jewish life in Palestine and Jewish life the world over will constantly be presented and analysed in the light of internationalist concerns."[263]

---

[259] Nadia Malinovich, *French and Jewish: Culture and the Politics of Identity in Early Twentieth-Century France* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 207.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Christophe Prochasson, *Les Intellectuels*, le socialisme et la guerre, 191-4, cited in Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 208.
[262] Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 208.
[263] Justin Godart, 'Le Sens d'une revue française: "Palestine", *Palestine* (Oct. 1927), 5, cited in Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 208-209.

Philo-Semitism as Anti-Anti-Semitism against the Radical Right

Critiques of the radical right's strain of anti-Semitism continued to be advanced as well. Just as anti-anti-Semitism had been used to fight against their enemy, before the First World War, this tendency remained during the interwar period. Socialist and communist daily press organs continually promoted philo-Semitism as one of tools to repel the radical right's prejudices. By doing so, they made anti-anti-Semitism one of the dogmas of the pan-left-wing bloc. It is interesting that several anti-anti-Semitic articles published in *L'Humanité* also contained some criticism of certain Jewish groups. One article from 1933 was titled: "no fight against anti-Semitism without a fight against the bourgeoisie"[264] This title itself highlighted the ambivalent attitudes towards Jews; the Jewish bourgeoisie were harshly and continually criticised through countless issues. Another article in *L'Humanité* in 1936 cited Stalin's speech on anti-Semitism occurring in Europe. This confirmed their support for the Soviet Union and indicated their disagreement to anti-Semitism as a doctrine against fascists. Under the title of "Fascist Anti-Semitism", the newspaper cited Stalin approvingly: "Anti-Semitism as an extreme form of racial chauvinism is the most dangerous survival of cannibalism… Anti-Semitism benefits the exploiters… by protecting capitalism from the workers… Anti-Semitism is dangerous for workers."[265] Moreover, through this title, they tried to distance themselves from anti-Semitism. These articles in *L'Humanité* implied that, in some way, anti-anti-Semitism was used in order to win against the extreme right in French politics. Particularly regarding the ambivalent perspectives on Jews through articles in *L'Humanité*, it is difficult to conclude they were genuinely philo-Semitic; rather, they were anti-anti-Semitic for its political

[264] *L'Humanité*, 20 April 1933, pp. 3, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
[265] *L'Humanité*, 6 December 1936, pp. 3, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

benefit.

Philo-Semitism and Jewish Proletariat in Interwar France

Socialist daily newspapers often mentioned Jewish socialists, thereby pointing to Jewish support of the wider cause. They introduced several 'qualified' socialist Jews who gave their life to support socialist activities. One article published in *Le Populaire* in September 1935 commemorated the death of Arkadi Kremer, a Russian Socialist who led the Bund and Jewish labour movements, expressing sympathy at news of his death. "He gave himself entirely to the Jewish labour movement, leading the Social-Democratic circles that carried out active propaganda among Jewish workers."[266] This indicates that leftist internationalist feeling was another prominent factor in philo-Semitism. Adopting a global perspective, *Le Populaire* dismissed the generalisation that all Jews were millionaires. In November 1933, an article cited the text by Fredrich Engels ("Unmasked Anti-Semitism", written in May 1890):

> Across North America, where millionaires are spread out whose riches can barely be expressed by our miserable Marks, Florins, and Francs, one would not find a single Jew among those American billionaires…. In England itself, Rothschild is only a modest man, compared to, for example, a Duke of Westminster… There were thousands and thousands of Jewish proletarians and these Jewish workers are the most exploited and the most miserable.[267]

The author of the article added that Jews had historically sided with socialism, emphasising

[266] *Le Populaire*, 23 September 1935, pp. 3, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
[267] *Le Populaire*, 13 November 1933, pp. 191, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

"Marx was Jew, as well as Ferdinand Lassalle."[268]

Anti-Semitism was blamed for dividing and distracting the French public and socialist daily newspapers also emphasised the solidarity among French workers and Jewish proletariats. *L'Humanité* once applauded the participation of Jewish proletarians at a general demonstration in Paris in 1933 and mentioned that anti-Semitism was the biggest enemy of revolutionary justice. An article published on the very front page with photos in 1933 raised its voice in protest: "In this demonstration particularly against fascism and Hitler's anti-Semitism, Jewish proletarians of Paris, both manuals and intellectuals, held an important place. By their number, by their ardour, by the sympathy they aroused in the great Parisian crowd, they have once again shown that the struggle against anti-Semitism must be proletarian and revolutionary."[269]

Conclusion

The humanitarian sentiments within left-wing philo-Semitic thinking should not be under-estimated. Based on republican and, later, internationalist principles and left-wing ideals, leftists actively protected Jews, including Dreyfus even though he was regarded as a member of the bourgeoisie. However, another reason for philo-Semitism must not be ignored. Philo-Semitic motivations often sprang from their political-positioning. Left-wing philo-Semitism was often very selective in their sympathies, and, like anti-Semitism, also distinguished Jews according to different types of political or economic behaviour. Overall, a major limitation of left-wing philo-Semitism was that it evolved into an anti-anti-Semitism position. This anti-anti-

[268] Ibid.
[269] *L'Humanité*, 10 April 1933, pp. 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Semitism finally appeared tragically once France was defeated by Nazi Germany and Vichy France came on the scene. Up until 1941, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were allied, which resulted in disarray among French communists, many of whom refrained from actively participating in resistance movements. In these new geopolitical conditions, some French Leftists became surprisingly indifferent towards Jewish suffering that ranged from confiscation to mass-murder, both in France and across Europe.

CHAPTER 4: Jewish Resistance – Jewish Identity and nationalism through Zionism

Introduction

Increasingly polarised politics and increasing anti-Semitic sentiments in the last decades of the Third French Republic were a turning point for Jewish communities in France. As shown in previous chapters, both right-wing and left-wing anti-Semites continually attacked Jews in France but differed over their own reasons and criteria; moreover, philo-Semites did not always defend Jews and their rights, having ambivalent perspectives towards Jews' presence in France. In this situation, the separation between the different Jewish communities – '*israélites'* and 'juifs' – also became more visible, as both detected the increasing danger to their position, reputation and existence in French society. Reacting to philo-Semitic speeches and resisting anti-Semitic-attacks, French Jews were forced to reconsider their national and ethnic identity. According to Benbassa, native French Jews, particularly the Consistorial authorities in Paris, concentrated on attributing the rapid spread of anti-Semitism to the many 'unintegrated' foreign Jewish immigrants and their political inclination and activities.[270] Confronted with hatred from their enemies, and contempt from some fellow Jews, immigrant Jews were attracted to the Zionist idea, as a form of self-defence and resistance. In particular, Zionism often worked as a political strategy of self-defence in the interwar period as Paula Hyman explained. The revival of anti-Semitism in France and international political turbulence,

[270] Benbassa, *the Jews of Modern France*, pp. 162.

especially anti-Semitism of the Nazis, led Zionism to play an important role as self-defence and resistance among Jews in the Third Republic.[271] Many immigrant Jews united under the banner of Zionism, thereby sharing a common political identity and bonds of solidarity.

This chapter will examine how French Jews defended themselves through the Zionist movement. First of all, the development of Zionism will be analysed, underlining the complex relation between native French Jews and immigrant Jews in interwar France. In particular, it will be demonstrated how the hostile attitude of assimilationist Jews drove the boom in Zionism. Beyond political anti-Semites, the inhospitable and antagonistic attitudes of assimilated Jews accelerated the development of Zionism as a way for immigrants to reclaim their dignity. Then, it will explain many aspects of the Zionist movement in the latter half of the Republic, for example their perspectives towards French foreign policy, or '*israélites' Zionists.* Additionally, Zionists' perspectives towards assimilationist Jews – who were often opposed politically to Zionism – will also be discussed, arguing that Zionism overall deepened sectarianism among Jewish communities in France.

Threats of Native French Jews in the Third Republic

As discussed in previous chapters, although they regarded themselves fully integrated and assimilated into French society, many 'israélites' were viewed still as exotic and not fully accepted to some sections of French society. In order to overcome this foreign image, the native French Jews continually participated in the patriotic and military struggles and succeeded in diverse fields of activity, including public office, state administration, the judiciary, communal

[271] Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 138.

philanthropy and France's imperial projects. Nonetheless, they could not completely succeed in being viewed 'true' French, much to their frustration.

Many israélites insisted that their relationship to Judaism was only religious and private; they argued they had appreciated French republican values, and were well-integrated into French society. Sylvain Lévy, a French-born Jew serving as a president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle from 1920 to 1935, revealed his thought on French identity and Jewish identity in a radio address on 20 February 1931 on the weekly show 'The Voice of Israel' that was broadcasted in Paris.[272] He said:

> Daughter of the French Revolution, of the French fatherland, French culture, and inheritor of Jewish beliefs and the Jewish culture, it [Alliance Israélite Universelle] was assigned the task of uniting the two magnificent traditions that had inspired it by a common ideal.[273]

Some assimilationist native Jews even declared that they did not have a separate Jewish identity at all, or argued that French identity must be prioritised before Jewish identity. For example, Jacques Helbronner (1873-1943), a leading member of Central Consistory of French Jews in Paris, led an assimilationist movement. He emphasised not only his own French identity, but also that of other assimilated French Jews. Against the backdrop of Hitler's rise to power, when the loyalty of French Jewry was continually questioned, Helbronner claimed in June 1933, "French Jews are French before being Jewish."[274]

---

[272] Sylvain Lévi, excerpt from "L'Alliance israélite universelle," in La Voix d'Israël, 1932, 140-49. Translated by Beatrice Bourgogne and Sarah Hammerschlag, cited in Sarah Hammerschlag (ed.) *Modern French Jewish Thought: Writing on Religion and Politics* (Waltham, 2018), pp. 48.

[273] Sylvain Lévi, excerpt from "L'Alliance israélite universelle," in La Voix d'Israël, 1932, 140-49., cited in Sarah Hammerschlag (ed.) Modern French Jewish Thought, pp. 52.

[274] Michael Curtis, *Verdict on Vichy: Power and Prejudice in the Vichy France Regime* p. 24, cited in Agnes

In the mid of 1930s, the negative responses to immigrants increased with national and international crises. In this turbulent context, right-wing Jewish nationalists openly expressed hostility towards immigrants Jews. Edmond Bloch (1884-1975), a Jewish-French lawyer, expressed his uncomfortable feeling towards his coreligionists from eastern Europe when he founded a national Jewish veterans' association (Union Patriotique des Français Israélite; UPFI) in 1934. Along with other right-wing French Jews, Bloch viewed their foreign brethren as a serious and major threat to their own 'good' reputation and 'stable' status. In order to minimise and avoid anti-Semitic threats, not only did he and the UPFI distance themselves from their coreligionists, but they also supported French right-wing dogmas and refused admitting non-naturalised and foreign Jews.[275]

Zionism in the Third French Republic

Many immigrant Jews supported the Zionist movement as they were not usually welcomed by their peers. Not only did assimilated French Jews seem indifferent (often hostile) to new migrants as discussed above, but also French society was not as friendly as they expected before coming over the country. The Zionist Federation of France was established in 1901 and enthusiastically recruited Jewish immigrants, especially those who came from eastern Europe. There were many Zionist associations in France and its colonies right before the First World War.[276] Zionism rapidly became popular over France, not only limited in Paris. For

Grunwald-Spier, *Who Betrayed the Jews: The Realities of Nazi Persecution in the Holocaust* (Amberly, 2017), pp. 46.

[275] Erin Corber, 'Bravery in the Borderlands, Martyrs on the Margins: Jewish War Heroes and World War I Narratives in France, 1914-1940', in Marsha L. Rozenblit and Jonathan Karp (eds.) *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East, and America* (New York, 2017), p. 95.

[276] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 146.

example, there were eight local associations in Paris, one in Nice and two in Tunis.[277]

Zionists actively expressed their thoughts on Jewish identity, anti-Semitism as well as articulated the purpose and ultimate goal of the Zionist movement, such as why it was essential for all Jews. Many Zionist presses were published and circulated in France throughout the Third Republic. In the 1890s, several Zionist newspapers were published in Yiddish as well as in French. *Parizer algemeyne yidishe folks-tsaytung* (Yiddish Newspaper of Paris in Yiddish) and *Di hoffnung hatikvah* (The Hope, Hatikvah (*Hatikvah* means 'hope' in Yiddish) in Yiddish) appeared respectively in 1892 and 1897. In the beginning of the twentieth century, more newspapers and magazines in Yiddish appeared in the foreign Jewish community; for example, *Moderne tsayt* (The Modern Time in French and Yiddish respectively), *Parizer zhurnal* (Paris Journal in Yiddish), *Dos idishe blat* (Yiddish Newspaper in Yiddish), and *Der nayer zhurnal* (The New Journal in Yiddish) appeared.[278] One of the most popular newspapers was *Der idisher arbayter* (the Yiddish Workers in Yiddish) which was a monthly newspaper published between 1911 and 1914; twenty-five issues (about a thousand copies for each issue) were published. Connected to the leftist ideas, it did not only attempt to form Jewish solidarity, but also criticised immigrant Jews whom they considered bourgeois. It continually criticised poor working conditions in immigrant workshops and encouraged strikes against immigrant bosses.[279] This confirmed that the foreign Jewish community was divided, as there was a tension between 'bourgeois' immigrant Jews and 'proletariat' immigrant Jews. Additionally, some immigrant Jewish press formed international solidarity among Zionists in other countries. For example, *Di yudishe tsukunft* (The Israel's future in Yiddish) was published in 1904, jointly

[277] Ibid.
[278] Green, *The Pletzl of Paris*, pp. 79-80.
[279] Ibid., 80.

published from Paris and London. In 1913, *Di ershte boyern-tsaytung in Pariz* (The First Bavarian Newspaper in Paris in Yiddish) appeared. It was another newspaper showing Jewish international solidarity, edited in Paris and printed in London.[280] One of the well-known Zionist newspapers was *L'Écho sioniste* (1899-1905/1912-14) which Aleksandre Marmorek (1865-1923) started. It was re-published later under the name of *Le Peuple juif* between 1916 and 1921.[281] *Cahiers Juifs* was another Zionist periodical that was circulated in the 1930s. The papers consistently argued for legitimacy of Zionism as a political project for all Jews regardless of their initial nationalities. Through these newspapers, Zionists continually documented many pogroms across European countries, such as Romania and the Russian empire. The Balfour Declaration, passed by the British government in 1917, promoted the Zionist movement and promised a Jewish national home. The famous phrase from the Balfour Declaration, "a national home for the Jewish people", soon became a slogan for Zionists. In *Le Peuple juif*, the importance and necessity of founding a Jewish national home were constantly stressed, sometimes with a citation from the Balfour Declaration.

The primary and the most urgent objective of Zionism was to fight against Jewish persecutions at home and abroad. Even though immigrant Jews fled to France to seek a safe place, they continued to be the target of anti-Semites. During the First World War, Zionist leaders actively emphasised that Zionism would be the only solution to overcome many dangers that they had met or would meet in the future. Baruch Hagani was an important figure in the Zionist movement in France. Hagani himself was born in France in 1885 but his parents were enthusiastic activists in the Zionist movement in Lithuania in the 1880s, before Theodor

[280] Ibid.
[281] Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 146.

Herzl launched political Zionism with the specific goal.[282] The editor of *Le Peuple Juif*, Baruch Hagani, emphasised that Zionism would play an important role to form a shared solidarity between native French Jews and foreign Jews. In an article in *Le Peuple Juif* in 1912, he stressed: "To prevent the descent into assimilation, to reconnect our French-speaking fellow Jews to Jewish traditions and culture, seems to us at the present time to be our overarching duty. And it is on this long-term goal that we would like before all else to focus our activity.[283] He additionally attempted to demonstrate the necessity of Zionism through an article, "Causes of Zionism", published in March 1917. He stressed that Jews had been persecuted in both East and West for different reasons, asserting, "The double origin of Zionist activity responds to two external situations: the beginning of Jewish persecutions in Russia and the beginning of the Dreyfus Affair in France. … Zionism was born out of anti-Semitism. … The Zionist solution not only satisfied the instincts and particular feelings of the Jews. It was to enable them to escape from their vicious economic situation too by organising a normal home on an autonomous territory."[284] Additionally, he blamed modern Frenchmen for failing to live up to France's 'proud' Republican values: "Republican France, Egalitarian France could not protect itself from the anti-Semitic leprosy."[285]

The other goal was criticising rampant anti-Semitic sentiment in French society. Zionist authors pointed out that French universalism actually erased Jewishness or forced Jews to hide their Jewish identity. Seeking to undo this effacement, Zionists in France attempted to

---

[282] Baruch Hagani, "Les Début du sionisme à Paris', cited in Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 65 and Malinovich, *French and Jewish*. pp. 58.
[283] 'Notre programme', *L'Écho sioniste* (10 Jan. 1912), 1, cited in Nadia Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 65.
[284] Baruch Hagani, 'Les Causes du Sionisme', *Le Peuple Juif: Ancien Écho sioniste*, no. 21, March 1917, pp. 7-8 and 11-12, 26/AS-15, Archives Nationales.
[285] Ibid., pp, 8, 26/AS-15, Archives Nationales.

form solidarity with many Zionists outside France. One article from *Le Peuple Juif* confirmed this. On 14 January 1919, it mentioned Morris Myer, a British Zionist at the time. Myer was a Romanian-born Jew and active Zionist. He moved to London in 1902 and soon became an active journalist. He became one of significant members in the British Zionist Federation and a delegate to Zionist Congresses, as a member of the Po'alei Zion (Workers of Zion).[286] Myer as an author castigated France's universalism through his article, "Un mot aux Juifs de France", published in *Le Peuple juif* in January 1919. He wrote, "France is the country that emancipated Jews… However, it has diminished the originality of Jewish life and weakened its national dimension and culture."[287]

Israélite Zionists

It is important not to generalise and imply that immigrant Jews only supported the Zionist idea and native French Jews always sided with assimilationism. It was much more complex. Of course, many native French Jews chose to stress their French national identity and prove French patriotism so that they could avoid becoming a target of anti-Semites. Nonetheless, *there were some significant Zionist figures among the* 'israélites', although the number of israélite Zionists were less numerous than that of immigrant Jewish Zionists. The existence of Zionist israélites indicated that the development of Zionism in France was not always predictable and it meant the separation between Zionists and anti-Zionists did not perfectly overlap the separation between the native French Jews and immigrant Jews.

[286] https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/myer-morris, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/po-alei-zion and https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Poale_Tsiyon. Po'alei Zion was a Jewish proletariat movement and it consisted of Zionism and socialism.

[287] Le Peuple juif, 14 Janaury 1919, pp, 3, Bibliothèque national de France.

Some of these Zionist israélites were assimilationist at first; however, they dramatically changed their thinking after recognising that their status that was not always secure in the Republic. One of the reasons was their disappointment at the lack of full recognition within French society. Some old-established French Jews who later became Zionists assumed that their goals to become 'true' French would never succeed in French society after witnessing a series of anti-Semitic outrages in the Republic. Even though they actively behaved as 'proper' French citizens, they could not completely erase the foreign and exotic image. For example, Edmond Fleg, Bernard Lazare, André Spire, and Jean-Richard Bloch, Armand Lunel and more were well-known leading Zionists who were from long-established French Jewish families.

Bernard Lazare (1865-1903) tried to defend Jewish rights and rebutted racist stereotypical Jewish images which was widespread in French society. He was from a long-established family. He first considered assimilation as a solution to anti-Semitism. Thus, he not only differentiated between 'israélites' and 'juifs', but also described a 'juif' community in faintly anti-Semitic terms. However, the Dreyfus Affair drove Lazare to side with the Zionist idea. He was asked to write a defence for Dreyfus; this opportunity made him think about the plight of other Jews as well as Dreyfus.[288] Edmond Fleg (1874-1963) was another important Zionist activist who was also born into an established French Jewish family in Geneva. As in Lazare's case, the Dreyfus Affair transformed this assimilated Jew's attitudes towards his civic identity and self-understanding. Once he started his studies at the École Normale Supérieure in 1892, he felt he could not retain his Jewish heritage; however, after he witnessed the plight of Captain Dreyfus, he changed his attitude all of sudden. He recalled in his book, *Why I Am a*

[288] *Sarah Hammerschlag* (ed.), *Modern French Jewish Thought*, pp. 30-*31.*

Jew, "when Dreyfus was recalled from the island by his judges at Rennes and condemned for the second time my life stood still. I could take no food. I felt myself banished from the brotherhood of man. And I asked myself "Jew, what is your place in the world?""[289] Fleg further explored Jewish identity from a religious perspective by writing poems such as '*Ecoute Israël*', '*Moïse et Bithia*' and '*La Vision d'Issac*'. His poems were published and cited in Zionist newspaper, *L'Écho sioniste*.[290] Fleg's works played an important role in providing a common identity to Jews and functioned as touching words to Zionists. His poems were also appreciated as the central consistory organ, *L'Univers israélite*, *c*ommented on them. However, they only focused on the religious perspective. In contrast, his poems later became a call for political solidarity with Zionists. Baruch Hagani commented Fleg's works, "the love that Judaism inspires within him – Judaism as a people, as a vibrant community – is profound."[291]

Victor Basch was another important figure in the Zionist movement in France. First of all, he was not a member of 'long-established' Jewish community, as he was born into a bourgeois family in Hungary in 1863. However, his family migrated to France when he was young, and he succeeded in integrating and assimilating into French society. He became a professor in German language and literature and then aesthetics at the Sorbonne.[292] Unlike many foreign Jewish attitudes on their identity, he showed a radical assimilationist attitude and stressed that there was no Jewish affiliations with himself: "I had practically forgotten that I was a Jew."[293] However, after the Dreyfus affair, he also suddenly changed his mind and reconsidered Jewish identity and furthermore Zionist ideology. In *Mon Judaïsme* published in

---

[289] Edmond Fleg, *Why I Am a Jew*, 37, cited in Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 54.
[290] Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 55-56.
[291] *L'Écho sionistes* 10 May 1913, cited in Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 56.
[292] Pascale Gruson, 'La Carrière universitaire de Victor Basch', 43, cited in Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 61.
[293] Victor Basch, 'Mon Judaïsme', Connaître, I (Aug. 1924), 5, cited in Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 61.

1924, he argued: “I entered it with all my heart. I entered with the great hope that those Jews who do not have a country will find one, that the eternal wanderers will finally be able to settle down in a homeland that on one will be able to take away from them.[294]

Sectarianism – Zionists against Anti-Zionists

The rise of Zionism among Jews in France led to growing sectarianism among French Jewish communities. Both assimilationist and Zionist Jews aimed slanders at each other. Assimilationist Jews, mostly consisting of native French Jews (but not exclusively), viewed Zionism as ridiculous and unrealistic and a dangerous idea for Jews in general. In contrast to assimilationists, Zionists harshly criticised their coreligionists who opposed the Zionist movement. Although vigorous Zionists were eager to build Jewish solidarity, their rigid attitude to defining Jewish identity excluded their brethren whom these Zionists did not consider sufficiently ‘Jewish’. That is, some extreme Zionists showed hatred towards some native French Jews who were opposed to their Zionist project. Expressing suspicious or opposite opinions towards Zionism was viewed as a ‘betrayal’ of Jewish causes.

This sectarianist sentiment already existed even before the Zionist feeling exploded in the interwar period. The response of Zionists to attacks on Algerian Jews during the Dreyfus Affair confirmed the seeds of later conflict were already present. When there were anti-Semitic riots in 1898, Joseph Reinach, a journalist and politician from an established French Jewish family, insisted that attacks on Algerian Jews were to be viewed equally as challenges on the French government and an attack on European civilisation. Reinach’s comment was openly

[294] Ibid.

reproached by Zionists, primarily because he did not defend Jews specifically, even though he himself was a Jew.[295] An article written by Adolphe Raskine in *Zion*, a newspaper where Bernard Lazare worked as editor, criticised Reinach for his temerity: "As always, the French Jews did not dare to defend their interests frankly, openly: it is their usual tactic to always hide behind the government and their fellow Catholics."[296] However, Reinach did not stop condemning Zionists as he regarded Zionism as "a trap set by the anti-Semites for the naïve or thoughtless."[297] Moreover, along with other assimilationist fellows, Reinach equated Zionism with anti-Semitism as he argued that both were trying to destroy the emancipatory legacy of the Revolution of 1789.[298] Early articles in *L'Univers israélite* and the Archives *israé*lite (both assimilated Jewish press) blamed Zionist ideology would, ironically, encourage anti-Semitism, although its ideals might be honourable.[299]

Several Zionist leaders continued to blame the paternalistic attitudes of assimilationists in the twentieth century. They considered the assimilationist idea as a threat to Jewish identity as well. Zadoc Kahn, a prominent rabbi serving as a Zionist leader, issued a comment after the Alliance Israélite Universelle tried to found schools in Tunisia and 'educate' the Tunisian Jews. Kahn revealed his uncomfortable feelings towards the assimilationist agenda of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. In the letter written in 1900, Kahn wrote, "The Alliance Israélite [Universelle] … in violation of the most basic rules of conduct, is seeking to impose the French spirit, embodied by the French national educational system, on the Jewish population of Tunisia.

---

[295] Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, pp. 258.
[296] Adolphe Raskine, L'Alg*érie', Zion, 30 June 1897, 51. (translated by me),* c*ited in* Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, pp. 258.
[297] Edmond LeRoy, 'Le royaume de Palestine: l'opinion de M. Reinach', *Le Figaro*, 7 Sept. 1897, cited in Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, pp. 275.
[298] Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, pp. 276.
[299] Malinovich, *French and Jewish*, pp. 59.

… In order to enlighten this population, to introduce it to modern life, one must not replace its traditions and historical memories by other traditions and other memories. One must not seek to replace one's own national spirit by that of another nation."[300]

An unknown author in *Le Peuple Juif* published in March 1919 blamed Sylvain Lévi for an article he had written claiming that the Zionist project might be difficult to realise. As the active member of the central committee of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Lévi clearly recognised the purpose of Zionism and its ambitious settlement project in Palestine. However, he carefully suggested the difficulty of plan, arguing, "It seems to me shocking to both reason and feeling," and adding, "that scarcely have we gotten past the stage of waiting to obtain quality of rights, we should now demand privileges and exceptional circumstances for the Jews of Palestine. Every exception always ends up backfiring on the person who asks for it and who benefits from it."[301] Several extreme Zionists denounced Lévi's negative attitude towards their national project. Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952), a famous Zionist activist, even described Lévi as a traitor.[302] Newspapers heaped fresh criticism on Lévi. In an article, "Le cas de M. Sylvain Lévi", an author wrote, "We challenge his right to speak not only on Jewish people but also on Judaism," then added, "Mr. Sylvain Lévi … [as a member of] the assimilated Jews … is no longer Jewish."[303] Some radical Zionists distanced themselves from the native French Jews who did not seem to embrace the Zionist movement. It drove them to consider that israélite

[300] AAIU, Tunisia I G 3, 2 October 1900, cited in Michel Abitbol, 'The Encounter between French Jewry and the Jews of North Africa: Analysis of a Discourse (1830-1914)', in Malino and Wasserstein (eds.) *The Jews in Modern France*, p. 53.
[301] On Lévi's remarks, see André Chouraqui, Cent Ans d'histoire: L'Alliance Israélite universelle et la renaissance comtemporaine (1860-1960) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 476-480, cited in Benbassa, *The Jews of France,* pp. 147.
[302] Benbassa, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 147.
[303] Le Peuple juif, 7 March 1919, pp. 3. Bibliothèque national de France.

were ‘harming’ the Jewish national project, and they did not qualify to be ‘Jewish’ anymore.

Zionist authors continued to deplore the anti-Zionist activity of the Alliance Israélite Universelle through the newspaper, *Le Peuple juif*. Just as Lévi was singled out, so other leading members were also targeted by Zionists. For example, one article, “Polémique” published in 1917, reproached Jacques Bigart, another leading member of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Being sarcastic, an author wrote:

> Mr. Jacques Bigart, a secretary general of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, made a statement in the ‘American Hebrew’ which he said that he opposed to demanding both the [auto-]emancipation of the Jews and the reestablishment of a Jewish state in Palestine … Our valiant apostles of assimilation, who renounced the past and the future of Jewish people became protagonists of the disappearance of our people; it is obvious that the question of restoration of our ancient homeland under the sky of Judah and on the banks of Jordan cannot be considered by them.[304]

From this article, it is important to note that the author indicated a sectarianist perspective by using the word ‘our’. By doing so, he tried to differentiate Zionists from assimilationists and ‘quasi’ Jews who kept threatening ‘true’ Jews’ political mission. The Alliance Israélite Universelle could not avoid criticism from Zionists, including those originally from long-established French Jewish families. In 1919, Edmond Fleg added his criticism on the Alliance Israélite Universelle’s anti-Zionist position and its obstinate attachment to nineteenth-century

[304] J. Jacobson, ‘Polémique’, *Le Peuple Juif: Ancien Écho sioniste*, no.29-30, July-August 1917, pp. 10, 26AS/15, Archives Nationales.

liberal and Enlightenment values.[305] Hence, it cannot be concluded that sectarianism among Zionists and anti-Zionists was not simply the rivalry between assimilated Jews and immigrant Jews. Rather, it brought a new tension and friction within and between French Jewish communities.

Severe criticism against assimilated Jews continued in the 1930s. A short-lived Zionist periodical, *Cahiers Juifs*, edited by Maxime Piha, expressed that Zionism is the only solution to the mortal threat of anti-Semitism. Nahum Goldmann (1895-1982) was born in the Russian Empire and became a Zionist as his father was also a passionate Zionist. Later, Goldmann founded the World Jewish Congress and served as a president for many years. In Cahiers Juifs, Goldmann convinced that Zionism was and would be the only solution for pogroms and Jewish suffering. Through the article "Union or Dispersion" published in Cahiers Juifs in 1934, he argued:

> Zionism is making an effort in a radical and decisive way, by means of the construction of a political centre in Palestine… For the millions of Jews who are and who remain in the Diaspora, the central task can only be partially accomplished by their concentration and their union in a community that is capable of acting.[306]

Additionally, he implied that assimilation could not protect Jews, stressing in the same article:

> Convening the World Jewish Congress in order to unite and organise Judaism around the world for the defence of its rights, above all parties and all

[305] Sally Charnow, 'French Jewish Identity in the Wake of the Dreyfus Affair, 1898-1931: The Story of Edmond Fleg', in Katz (ed.) *Revising Dreyfus*, p. 72-73.
[306] D'Nahum Goldmann, 'Union ou Dispersion', *Cahiers Juifs*, no. 8, February 1934, pp. 102, 26AS/7, Archives Nationales.

> organisations, is not new. In the nineteenth century, already, Jewish leaders tried this. The well-known example was the Alliance Israélite Universelle; however, these attempts have all failed.[307]

In an earlier issue of the same periodical, the editor, Maxime Piha, displayed his hostile attitude towards assimilationists with a more aggressive tone. In an article entitled, "The Assimilated and Renegade", Piha aggressively displayed his negative sentiment towards assimilated Jews. He depicted the assimilationist attitude as destroying Jewishness: "The assimilated have tried to reject all their traditions which they no longer understood; they have forgotten or ignored their culture, their language, their ancestral heritage, which constituted themselves.[308]

Up until the very end of the Third French Republic, the separation between Zionists and non-Zionists (mostly assimilated Jews) continued to exist. Zionists recognised the horrendous anti-Semitic threats that were already rampant in Nazi Germany and other countries in Europe in the late 1930s. They kept arguing that Zionism would be the only solution and, especially, warned 'israélites' that the assimilationist method would not provide the protection or assure the future of French Jews. On the eve of the Second World War, Zionists pointed this out through another Zionist periodical, *Shem: revue d'action hébraïque*, published in May 1939. In the first issue, G. Blumberg predicted the severe and indiscriminate anti-Semitic policies and persecutions that were applied to both assimilated French Jews and the other Jews under the Vichy regime and Nazi Germany during the war. "Everyone recognises that French Jews are Jews. … Some (of the israélites) fail to believe that anti-Semitism can ever reach them, and

---

[307] Ibid., pp. 97, 26AS/7, Archives Nationales.
[308] Maxime Piha, 'Assimilé ou Renegade', *Cahiers Juifs*, no. 2, 1934, pp. 94, 26AS/7, Archives Nationales.

think that the peril concerns only foreign Jews and recent-coming immigrant Jews, whom they considered not French enough," and he added, "It is no longer sufficient to delete the word 'israélite' and to be baptised. … Christians are not all French. Christianity is international, like Judaism."[309] As Blumberg emphasised in the article, not only foreign Jews, but also assimilationist Jews would become the target of the Vichy regime's anti-Semitic persecutions.

International Connection

After the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Zionists figured in the foreign policies of European powers, not only France alone. Displaying a positive reaction to the British policy concerning mandate Palestine, French Zionists welcomed British politicians whom they considered sympathetic to their national project. Once Winston Churchill was appointed as the Secretary of State for the Colonies in February 1921, *Le Peuple Juif* enthusiastically welcomed his promotion, noticing in the same month, "Mr. Churchill, a member of the British government who has just been appointed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, is a close friend of Palestinian Jews, who will be in his department", and welcomed Leo Amery, who was Jewish on his mother's side but kept it secret: "His parliamentary secretary, Mr Amery, is also very well-disposed towards the Zionist idea."[310]

Conclusion

[309] G. Blumberg, 'Aux français Israélites', *Shem: revue d'action hébraïque*, no. 1, June 1939, pp. 54 and 58, 26AS/20, Archives Nationales.
[310] 'Churchill et la Palestine', *Le Peuple Juif*, No. 8, 25 February 1921, pp. 9, 26AS/15, Archives Nationales.

Throughout the Third Republic, Zionism played the important role for Jews to fight back against the anti-Semitism that threatened both Jews' physical safety and their collective identity. Moreover, it offered an ethnic solidarity for Jews, especially foreign Jews who were comparably more exposed to anti-Semites, and urged them to unite together. By doing so, many immigrant Jews who came from various countries in Europe, North Africa and elsewhere could form common identity under the name of Jews and Judaism. After several decades, its objectives became ever clearer, from a vague Jewish nationalism seeking to create a new land to establishing Jewish home in Palestine (then under British Mandate).

Another important point is the existence of the assimilated Jewish Zionists, some of whom led the Zionist movement in France. It indicates two significant features of Zionism in the French Republic. The other significant point is sectarianism among French Jewish communities. According to Zionist leaders, such as Baruch Hagani, Bernard Lazare, Zadoc Kahn or Edmond Fleg, the primary and the most important mission of Zionism was to protect the Jews in general against anti-Semitic attacks. They, however, did not hesitate to show strong hostility towards anyone who was indifferent to or critical of their ambitious national project. Therefore, the Zionist movement in the Republic could not completely solve the existing tension and friction among Jewish communities in France, but rather deepened it. These tensions were laid bare in the tragic circumstances of 1940.

Conclusion

Fate of Jewish Communities in 1940 (Occupation and Holocaust)

The defeat of the Republic in 1940 and the installation of the far-right, collaborationist government was a disaster to all Jewish communities in France. The Vichy regime was extremely hostile to both and applied the same legislation regardless. Assimilated French Jews stubbornly believed that the Vichy regime would, at least, protect them because they not only hold French citizenship, but also most of them originally came from long-established French Jewish families. Some did not even attempt to hide or escape France based on this delusional hope.

Even after the Nazis occupied France in the summer of 1940, thousands of Jewish families still resided in Paris. For example, Gisèle Winton, one of the French Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, remembered: "I am a French Jewess and was born in Paris. … They [Germans] occupied France in May 1940. I was a little girl at the time and remember that all my family, aunties, uncles, cousins and my parents went to Royan, a seaside resort situated in the west of France. I was told later, that we stayed there for three months. We then returned to Paris."[311] Native French Jews firmly trusted their country would protect them according to the Republican values and they often distanced themselves from foreign Jews. Rather, they believed they would not face lethal danger from the Nazis, let alone from their own government, because they viewed themselves as possessing the rights of Frenchmen. Native French Jews seemed to believe that they would never be a target of Vichy's anti-Semitic attacks even after

[311] Gisèle Winton, 'Childhood Memories', in *We Remember: Child Survivors of the Holocaust Speak* (Leicester, 2011), p. 251.

a series of discriminatory laws were issued and French police rounded up Jews. Hélène Berr, known as 'French Anne Frank', displayed her identity in her diary written in the wartime. As she was born into a long-established French Jewish family that lived in France for generations, she and her family were fully assimilated into French society. In her diary, she wrote on 27 July 1942: "No, I do not belong to the Jewish race. … Why create States within States? … French Revolution, which recognised Jews only as individuals, not Judaism as a race. Surely, it's the only principle that still stands. Judaism is a *religion* and not a race."[312]

The example of Raymond-Raoul Lambert (1894-1943) confirmed this sentiment. Lambert was born in a long-resident Jewish family in Montmorency and served in two world wars. He, additionally, served as a general secretary of the Comité d'Assistance aux Réfugiés (Jewish Community's central refugee organisation in French) during the 1930s. He was also one of the leading members of assimilated Jews, as the chief editor of *Univers Israélite*. He recognised the threat after France was defeated by the Nazis; however, he did not lose his belief and hope in the values of France as his protector. On July 15 1940, he wrote in his journal: "French Judaism lives in particular anguish. It agrees to suffer like all but fears discrimination possibly imposed by the enemy … but I still have confidence. France cannot accept everything and it is not for nothing that for more than a century my ancestors have mingled on this soil – that I have fought two wars."[313] After few months in the same year, another leading native Jew sent a letter to Marshal Pétain. General Pierre Boris who fought in the First World War appealed to the Marshal after a series of anti-Semitic policies became an official law of Vichy France. He sent a setter in November 1940: "I believe that I have the right and the duty to raise this

[312] H*é*lène Berr, *Journal*, trans. David Bellos (Quercus, 2008), p. 111-112.
[313] Raymond-Raoul Lambert, *Carnet d"un témoin*, p. 72, cited in Green, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 163.

protest. … because I belong to a family that has been French for centuries and which has given France many honourable and honoured functionaries and officers."[314] Many other prominent native Jews continually appealed at the injustice of exposing them to anti-Semitic discrimination. While arguing their Frenchness, they failed to protect foreign Jews. Nancy Green stressed in her book: "What is absent in these personal and collective remonstrances to Vichy leaders is any protest of the distinctive victimization of non-French Jews, who could not be subsumed in the term "Français israélite.""[315]

Unlike many native French Jews who did not take the risk seriously, the response of immigrant Jews was different. Although many members in the foreign Jewish community were supportive of Zionism, a considerable number of foreign Jews actively joined the French military as they did in the First World War. According to Susan Zuccotti's study, approximately 30 per cent of foreigners were drafted or volunteered into French military service in the early months of the conflict.[316] Since the Third French Republic, some foreign Jews believed that their assimilationist attitudes would protect them from anti-Semitism. There were extreme cases in which some assimilationist foreign Jews were eager to show that they were not 'Jewish' at all. This sometimes appeared as a form of self-hatred. Irène Némirovsky was a famous example of this category. She was born in Kiev in 1903 and moved to France when she was a teenager. Although she was a passionate Francophile and fervent assimilationist, she was unsuccessful in her bid to obtain French citizenship and lost her life at Auschwitz in 1942. According to Susan Robin Suleiman, she sought a way to be a 'good' or 'exceptional' Jew, distancing herself from the stereotypical 'bad' Jew.[317] Her earlier works reflected her thoughts

[314] Green, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 166.
[315] Ibid., pp. 167.
[316] Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust*, pp. 31-32, cited in Green, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 163.
[317] Suleiman, 'Irène Némirovsky and the "Jewish Question" in Interwar France', pp. 12.

as she depicted Jewish characters negative, sometimes even from an anti-Semitic perspective.[318] Whilst not as strongly expressed as Némirovsky, several other Jewish-born writers were quick to leave behind their heritage, such as Nathalie Sarraute, a Russian Jew later becoming lawyer and writer, and Elsa Triolet, another Russian Jewish writer, married the non-Jewish French writer, Louis Aragon.[319]

In spite of assimilationist efforts by native French Jews, recent-naturalised Jews or assimilationist foreign Jews, their efforts to protect their rights did not succeed as the Vichy regime initiated Nazi-style persecution by categorising Jews by race. The Vichy France regulated its notorious anti-Semitic law, *Statut des Juifs* (Jewish Law in French) on 3 October 1940. Through this law, the Vichy government provided specific criteria to 'decide' who was considered Jew. If someone had more than three Jewish grandparents or had two Jewish grandparents with Jewish spouse, this person was then 'legally' a Jew under the Vichy law.[320] Based on this racial differentiation, Jews were not allowed to obtain certain professions. For example, French Jews, both native French Jews and foreign Jews, were excluded from the civil service, nor could they serve as officers in the French army. They were also not allowed to occupy positions in education, press, radio and cinema.[321] In the following year, the second law was issued on 2 June 1941, which endangered all Jews in France again.

Having citizenship did not save French Jews' lives at this point. On 24 October 1870, Adolphe Crémieux, the Minister of Justice, declared that Algerian Jews would have an equal civil right as other French citizens under the Crémieux Decree, the renowned decree named

[318] Ibid., pp. 10.
[319] Ibid., pp. 22.
[320] https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206045.pdf
[321] Green, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 165.

after him. However, French citizenship was soon taken from Algerian Jews; moreover, some of them were even deported to death camps during the war. Native French Jews soon recognised the danger they faced after the Velodrome d'Hiv roundup in the summer of 1942. After the roundup, they were harshly persecuted and faced a mortal danger like all foreign Jews subject to the rule of Vichy France and Nazi Germany. After decades of mutual rivalry and suspicion, Jews of different backgrounds and nationalities were now condemned to share the same fate.

This dissertation has explored the changing perceptions of the French Jewish community throughout the Third Republic – both how different types of Jews were discussed in the press, and in turn how different Jewish groups thought of their place in France and the world. The bitter culture within French politics and society fuelled the rivalry between France's Jews. Ever since 1790-91, French society has continually asked Jews to become 'proper' French citizens. How to best demonstrate this patriotism, and who could do so first, was a source of competition. Before massive immigration started from eastern Europe, the Sephardi attempted to distance and differentiate themselves from Ashkenazi Jews in East. Subsequently, when these two Jewish communities more or less became a single ethnic community, 'israélite' community, there began another rivalry between israélites and juifs, namely foreign Jews.

Additionally, different anti-Semitic criteria of far right and extreme left endangered French Jews. Even though many native-born French Jews were eager to prove their devotion to France, they were confronted with attacks by either right-wing or left-wing activists and commentators. Their willingness to remove their Jewish identity was not a solution to avoid anti-Semitism. Selective philo-Semitic sentiments from both political factions did not overcome surging anti-Semitic mood in French public discourse. The case of foreign Jews was more precarious than their French coreligionists. Overcoming their perception as exotic and

subversive, they also tried to integrate and assimilate into French society and native French Jewish community, although they quickly discovered substantial barriers. This became one of critical reasons why many foreign Jews supported the Zionist idea against rising anti-Semitism in France and indifferent – and sometimes aggressive – attitudes of assimilated French Jews.

Prospective Directions of Further Research

Several sub-topics regarding this research can be further. Regarding sources, it is true that many printed sources showcase the variety of positions within philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism. Most newspapers used in this research were very helpful in conducting research. They were very polemical so they did not hesitate to show their perspectives towards Jews; they were also more specialised on the issue compared to more mainstream press, such as *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Libération*, in which comments on Jews were expressed with more reserve and mixed in with other subjects. In a fragmentary corpus, the run of newspapers is often not complete, however, and there is not full biographical information for the contributors, sometimes including the editor himself, who actively published articles in these newspapers and periodicals. Further research into these commentators would shed new light on their motivation and particular personal connections to Jews and Jewish politics. In particular, studies on philo-Semitism of the French Right would need to be further explored. Compared to many works on anti-Semitism during the interwar period and the Second World War, there are many subfields to be studied, such as motivations of right-wing philo-Semites or their rescue of the Jews in the wartime.

Additionally, it would be good to understanding the dissemination of newspapers – their circulation – as well as the impact printed sources that were published in other regions

than Paris. Throughout the Third French Republic, the majority of foreign Jews tended to inhabit Paris, as they considered Paris comparably easier to settle in with other migrants. As a result, the newspapers studied here are mostly Parisian, so what was happening in other cities or rural regions of France remains more elusive. Accessing sources in other regions of France would bring a different dimension by revealing how debates varied according to areas of concentrated Jewish settlement and patterns of local politics. There may have been substantial issues in how Jewish communities located in the south, such as Bordeaux or Marseille, and other Jewish communities located in east, such as cities in Alsace-Lorraine, felt towards the Republic and their receptiveness to radical politics and Zionism.

The other sub-topic that would need further research is information on foreign and immigrant Jews in the Third French Republic. Some articles introduced different refugee Jews' communities, for example, where and why they fled from. However, the research could be expanded by studying different experiences of various immigrant Jewish communities, each shaped by distinct national traditions and conditions of emancipation. For example, the Russian and Rumanian Jews often faced fatal crises due to pogroms and had been restricted to rural communities. However, German and Austrian Jews flourished in many bourgeois professions, despite the prevalence of anti-Semitism and social exclusion, and were comparably secure in their home countries up until the Nazi threat began. Not only immigrant Jews coming from eastern Europe, but also Jews who came from the Maghreb had different experience as they were not also easily integrated into the assimilated Jewish community or French society even though they had French citizenship. In the short space of this dissertation, it was impossible to count all foreign Jewish communities, which present considerable linguistic challenges too. Therefore, studying these communities' experiences and conflicted attachments during the

Third French Republic would bring additional insights into the self-understandings of Jews in modern France.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Manuscript - Archives

Archives Nationales

- F/17 12516/2: Document, 8 May 1835 and Document, 4 June 1835. (Complaints of Frenchmen towards Jews)
- 26/AS-7 (Cahiers Juifs)
- 26/AS-12 (La Juste Parole)
- 26/AS-15 (Le Peuple juif)
- 26/AS-20 (Shem: revue d'action hébraïque)
- Bibliothèque nationale de France (Gallica)
    - https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb327877302 (L'Humanité)
    - http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34429265b (L'Œuvre)
    - http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41319010t (Le Peuple Juif)
    - http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34393339w (Le Populaire)

Archives de la préfecture de police

- BA 1708 – 7023-H-5.
    - Report on statistics on the motivation of migration among recent migrants in the 1910s.
    - Boycott on Russian Jewish Bakeries in Paris.

Printed Primary Sources

- Berr, Hélène. *Journal*. Translated by David Bellos. Quercus: Maclehose Press, 2008.
- Lévi, Sylvain. Excerpt from "L'Alliance israélite universelle," in La Voix d'Israël, 1932, 140-49. Translated by Beatrice Bourgogne and Sarah Hammerschlag, In *Modern French Jewish Thought: Writing on Religion and Politics*, edited by Sarah Hammerschlag. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2018.
- Winton, Gisèle "Childhood Memories," In *We Remember: Child Survivors of the Holocaust Speak* Leicester: Matador, 2011.

Secondary Sources

Books and Book Chapters

- Abitbol, Michel. "The Encounter between French Jewry and the Jews of North Africa: Analysis of a Discourse (1830-1914)," In *The Jews in Modern France*, edited by Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, 31-53. Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1985.
- Adler, Jacques. *The Jews of Paris and the Final Solution: Communal Responses and Internal Conflicts, 1940-1944*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Becker, Jean-Jacques. "De la Révolution aux années 1880," In *Les Juifs de France: De la Révolution française à nos jours*, edited by Nadia Déhan-Rotschild et Catherine Morhange, 23-74. Lonrai: Liana Levi, 1998.
- Berkovitz, Jay R. *The Shaping of Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century France*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989.
- Benbassa, Esther. *The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Birnbaum, Pierre. "*Anti-Semitism and Anticapitalism in Modern France*." In *The Jews in Modern France*, edited by Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, 214-223. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985.
- Birnbaum, Pierre. *Anti-Semitism in France: A Political History from Léon Blum to the Present*. Translated by Miriam Kochan. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Birnbaum, Pierre. "Between Social and Political Assimilation: Remarks on the History of Jews in France," Translated by Jacqueline Kay In *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, edited by Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Birnbaum, Pierre. "Grégoire, Dreyfus, Drancy, and the Rue Copernic: Jews at the Heart of French History," Translated by Arthur Goldhammer In *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past Volume I: Conflicts and Divisions*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996
- Birnbaum, Pierre. *Les Fous de la République: Histoire politique des Juifs d'Etat de Gambetta à Vichy*. Paris: Fayard, 1992.
- Birnbaum, Pierre. *Jewish Destines: Citizenship, State, and Community in Modern France*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000.
- Brustein, William I. and Louisa Roberts. *The Socialism of Fools?: Leftist Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Byrnes, Robert F. *Anti-Semitism in France, Volume 1: The Prologue to the Dreyfus*

Affair. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press: 1950.

- Cahm, Eric. *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society and Politics*. London: Longman, 1996.
- Caron, Vicki. *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933-1942*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Charnow, Sally. "French Jewish Identity in the Wake of the Dreyfus Affair, 1898-1931: The Story of Edmond Fleg," in *Revising Dreyfus*, edited by Maya Balakirsky Katz, 61-78. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Cohen, William B. and Irwin M. Wall. "French Communism and the Jews," in *The Jews in Modern France*, edited by Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, 81-102. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985.
- Conklin, Alice L., Sarah Fishman and Robert Zaretsky. *France and Its Empire since 1870*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Corber, Erin. "Bravery in the Borderlands, Martyrs on the Margins: Jewish War Heroes and World War I Narratives in France, 1914-1940," In *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East, and America*, edited by Marsha L. Rozenblit and Jonathan Karp, 85-111. New York: berghahn, 2017.
- Datta, Venita. *The Birth of a National Icon*. Albany: State University of New York press, 1999.
- Everton, Elizabeth. "Line and Shadow: Envisioning Anti-Dreyfusism in *Psst…!*," in *Revising Dreyfus*, edited by Maya Balakirsky Katz, 217-268. Leidon, Brill: 2013.
- Graetz, Michael. *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France: From the French Revolution to the Alliance Israélites Universelle*. Translated by Jane Marie Todd. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Green, Nancy. *The Pletzl of Paris*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986.
- Grunwald-Spier, Agnes. *Who Betrayed the Jews: The Realities of Nazi Persecution in the Holocaust*. Amberly: The Hill, Stroud, 2017.
- Hammerschlag, Sarah. *Modern French Jewish Thought: Writing on Religion and Politics*. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2018.
- Harris, Ruth. *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century*. New York: Holt/Metropolitan Books, 2010.
- Hyman, Paula E. *The Jews of Modern France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Hyman, Paula E. "The Social Contexts of Assimilation: Village Jews and city Jews in Alsace," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-century France*, edited by Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, 110-129. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1992.

- Kalman, Julie. *Rethinking Antisemitism in Nineteenth-Century France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Kenez, Peter. *The Coming of the Holocaust: From Antisemitism to Genocide*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Leff, Lisa Moses. *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Malinovich, Nadia. *French and Jewish: Culture and the Politics of Identity in Early Twentieth-Century France*. Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008.
- Marrus, Michael. *The Politics of Assimilation: A study of the French Jewish Community at the time of the Dreyfus Affair*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Marrus, Michael R. and Robert O. Paxton. *Vichy France and the Jews*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Martin, Marc. *Médias et journalistes de la République. Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997.*
- Passmore, Kevin. *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Pierard, Pierre. *Les Laïcs dans l'Église de France: XIXe-XXe siècle. Paris:* Editions de l'Atelier, 1989.
- Poznanski, Renée. *Jews in France during World War II*. Translated by Nathan Bracher. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2001.
- Rayski, Adam. *The Choice of the Jews under Vichy: Between Submission and Resistance*. Translated by Will Sayers. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.
- Rosenberg, Clifford. *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Ryan, Donna E. *The Holocaust & the Jews of Marseille: The Enforcement of Anti-Semitic Policies in Vichy France*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996.
- Samuels, Maurice. *The Right to Difference: French Universalism and the Jews*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Schechter, Ronald. *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Schuker, Stephen A. "Origins of the "Jewish Problem" in the Later Third Republic." in *The Jews in Modern France*, , edited by Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, 135-180. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985.
- Sherwood, John M. *Georges Mandel and the Third Republic*. Stanford: Stanford

University Press, 1970.

- Soucy, Robert. *French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Soucy, Robert. *French Fascism: The Second Wave, 1933-1939*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Sternhell, Zeev. *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*. Translated by David Maisel. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986
- Sternhell, Zeev. "The Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic." In *The Jews in Modern France*, edited by Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, 103-134. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985.
- Thomas, Martin. *The French empire between the wars: Imperialism, Politics and Society*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005.
- Warner, Geoffrey. *Pierre Laval and the Eclipse of France*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968.
- Weil, Patrick "De l'affaire Dreyfus à l'Occupation," In *Les Juifs de France: De la Révolution française à nos jours*, edited by Nadia Déhan-Rotschild et Catherine Morhange: 103-168. (Lonrai: Liana Levi, 1998).
- Weinberg, David H. *A Community on Trial: The Jews of Paris in the 1930s*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977.
- Zuccotti, Susan. *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews*. New York: BasicBooks, 1993.

Articles

- Caron, Vicki. "The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered," *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 1 (1998): 24-73.
- Chalaby, Jean K. "Twenty Years of Contrast: The French and British Press during the Interwar Period," *European Journal of Sociology* 37, no. 1 (1996): 143-159.
- Comte, Bernard. "Françoise Mayeur. L'aube. Étude d'un journal d'opinion (1932-1940)" *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France*, 53, no. 150 (1967): 135-137.
- Fitch, Nancy. "Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France," *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 1 (1992): 55-95.
- Green, Nancy L. "Jewish Migrations to France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Community or Communities," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 23 (1989): 135-153.

- Green, Nancy L. “Socialist Anti-Semitism, Defense of a Bourgeois Jew and Discovery of the Jewish Proletariat: Changing Attitudes of French Socialists before 1914,” *International Review of Social History* 30 no. 3 (1985): 374-399.
- Kates, Gary. “Jews into Frenchmen: Nationality and Representation in Revolutionary France,” *Social Research* 56, no. 1 (1989): 213-232.
- Katz, Ethan. “Between emancipation and persecution: Algerian Jewish memory in the *long durée* (1930-1970),” *The Journal of North African Studies* 17, no. 5 (2012): 793-820.
- Maritain, Jacques. “Religion and Politics of France,” *Council on Foreign Relations* 20, no. 2 (1942), 266-281.
- Moon, Parker Thomas. “The Social Catholic Movement in France under the Third Republic,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 7, no. 1 (1921): 24-34.
- Poujol, Catherine. “Oscar de Férenzy ou les limites du philosemitisme dans l’entre-deux-guerres,” *Les Belles Lettre* 40, no. 1 (2007): 14-29.
- Suleiman, Susan Rubin. “Irène Némirovsky and the “Jewish Question” in Interwar France,” *Yale French Studies* no. 121, Literature and History: Around “Suite Française” and “Les Bienveillantes” (2012): 8-33.
- Szajkowski, Zosa. “The Sephardic Jews of France during the Revolution of 1789,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 24 (1955): 137-164.
- Szajkowski, Zosa. “Population Problems of Marranos and Sephardim in France, from the 16th to the 20th Centuries,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 27 (1958): 83-105.

Website

- https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/myer-morris
- https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/po-alei-zion
- https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206045.pdf
- https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Poale_Tsiyon.

Illustrations

- Figure 1: anti-Semitic caricature of É*douard de Rothschild (L’Humanité*, 27 July 1935, pp. 4, Bibliothèque nationale de France.)
- Figure 2: anti-Semitic caricature of Georges Mandel (*L’Humanité*, 15 January 1935, pp. 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France.)